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The Band of Ethelberta.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ETHELBERTA'S DRESSING-ROOM—MR. DONCASTLE'S HOUSE.



HE dressing of Ethelberta for the dinner-party was an undertaking into which Picotee threw her whole skill as tiring-woman. Her energies were brisker that day than they had been at any time since the Julians first made preparations for departure from town; for a letter had come to her from Faith, telling of their arrival at the old cathedral city, which was found to suit their inclinations and habits infinitely better than London; and that she would like Picotee to visit them there

some day. Picotee felt, and so probably felt the writer of the letter, that such a visit would not be very practicable just now; but it was a pleasant idea, and for fastening dreams upon was better than nothing.

Such musings were encouraged also by Ethelberta's remarks as the dressing went on.

"We will have a change soon," she said; "we will go out of town for a few days. It will do good in many ways. I am getting so alarmed about the health of the children; their faces are becoming so white and thin and pinched, that an old acquaintance would hardly know them; and they were so plump when they came. You are looking as pale as a ghost, and I daresay I am too. A week or two at Knollsea will set us right."

"Oh, how charming!" said Picotee, gladly. Knollsea was a village on the coast, not very far from Melchester, the new home of Christopher; not very far, that is to say, in the eye of a sweetheart; but seeing that there was, as the crow flies, a stretch of twenty miles between the two places, and that more than half the distance was without a railway, an elderly gentleman might have considered their situations somewhat remote from each other.

"Why have you chosen Knollsea?" enquired Picotee.

"Because of aunt's letter from Rouen—have you seen it?"

"I did not read it through."

"She wants us to get a copy of the registry of her baptism; and she is not absolutely certain which of the parishes in and about Knollsea they were living in when she was born. Mother, being a year younger, cannot tell of course. First I thought of writing to the clergyman of each parish, but that would be troublesome; and if we go down there for a few days, and take some lodgings, we shall be able to find out all about it at leisure. Gwendoline and Joey can attend to mother and the people downstairs, especially as father will look in every evening until he goes out of town, to see if they are getting on properly. It will be such a weight off my soul to slip away from acquaintances here. At the same time I ought not to speak so, for they have been very kind. I wish we could go to Rouen afterwards; aunt repeats her invitation as usual. However, there is time enough to think of that."

Ethelberta was dressed at last, and beholding the lonely look of poor Picotee when about to leave the room, she could not help having a sympathetic feeling that it was rather hard for her sister to be denied so small an enjoyment as a menial peep at a feast when she herself was to sit down to it as guest.

"If you still want to go and see the procession downstairs you may do so," she said reluctantly; "provided that you take care of your tongue when you come in contact with Menlove, and adhere to father's instructions as to how long you may stay. It may be in the highest degree unwise; but never mind, go."

Then Ethelberta departed for the scene of action, just at the hour of the sun's lowest decline, when it was fading away, yellow and mild as candle-light, and when upper windows facing north-west reflected dissolving views of tawny cloud with brazen edges, the original picture of the same being hidden from sight by soiled walls and slaty slopes.

Before entering the presence of host and hostess, Ethelberta contrived to exchange a few words with her father.

"In excellent time," he whispered. "About half of them are here."

"Mr. Neigh?"

"Not yet; he's coming."

"Lord Mountclere?"

"Yes. He came absurdly early; ten minutes before anybody else, so that Mrs. D. could hardly get on her bracelets and things soon enough to scramble down stairs and receive him; and he's as nervous as a boy. Keep up your spirits, dear, and don't mind me."

"I will, father. And let Picotee see me at dinner if you can. She is very anxious to look at me. She will be here directly." And Ethelberta joined the chamberful of assembled guests, among whom for the present we lose sight of her.

Meanwhile the evening outside the house was deepening in tone, and the lamps began to blink up. Her sister having departed, Picotee hastily arrayed herself in a little black jacket and chip hat, and tripped across the park to the same point. Chickerel had directed a maidservant known as Jane to receive his daughter and make her comfortable; and that friendly person, who spoke as if she had known Picotee five-and-twenty years, took her to the housekeeper's room, where the visitor deposited her jacket and hat, and rested awhile.

A quick-eyed, light-haired, slight-built woman came in when Jane had gone. "Are you Miss Chickerel?" she said to Picotee.

"Yes," said Picotee, guessing that this was Menlove, and fearing her a little.

"Jane tells me that you have come to visit your father, and would like to look at the company going to dinner. Well, they are not much to see, you know; but such as they are you are welcome to the sight of. Come along with me."

"I think I would rather wait for father, if you will excuse me, please."

"Your father is busy now; it is no use for you to think of saying anything to him."

Picotee followed her guide up a back staircase to the height of several flights, and then, crossing a landing, they descended to the upper part of the front stairs.

"Now look over the bannister, and you will see them all in a minute," said Mrs. Menlove. "Oh, you need not be timid; you can look out as far as you like. We are all independent here; no slavery for us: it is not as it is in the country, where servants are considered to be of different blood and bone from their employers, and to have no eyes for anything but their work. Here they are coming."

Picotee then had the pleasure of looking down upon a series of human crowns—some black, some white, some strangely built upon, some smooth and shining—descending the staircase in disordered column and

great discomfort, their owners trying to talk, but breaking off in the midst of syllables to look to their footing. The young girl's eyes had not drooped over the handrail more than a few moments when she softly exclaimed, "There she is, there she is! How lovely she looks, does she not?"

"Who?" said Mrs. Menlove.

Picotee recollected herself, and hastily drew in her impulses. "My dear mistress," she said blandly. "That is she on Mr. Doncastle's arm. And look, who is that funny old man the elderly lady is helping downstairs?"

"He is our honoured guest, Lord Mountclere. Mrs. Doncastle will have him all through the dinner, and after that he will devote himself to Mrs. Petherwin, your 'dear mistress.' He keeps looking towards her now, and no doubt thinks it a nuisance that she is not with him. Well, it is useless to stay here. Come a little further—we'll follow them." Menlove began to lead the way downstairs, but Picotee held back.

"Won't they see us?" she said.

"No. And if they do, it doesn't matter. Mrs. Doncastle would not object in the least to the daughter of her respected head man being accidentally seen in the hall."

They descended to the bottom and stood in the hall. "Oh, there's father!" whispered Picotee, with childlike gladness, as Chickereel became visible to her by the door. The butler nodded to his daughter, and became again engrossed in his duties.

"I wish I could see her—my mistress—again," said Picotee.

"You seem mightily concerned about your mistress," said Menlove. "Do you want to see if you have dressed her properly?"

"Yes, partly; and I like her, too. She is very kind to me."

"You will have a chance of seeing her soon. When the door is nicely open you can look in for a moment. I must leave you now for a few minutes, but I will come again."

Menlove departed, and Picotee stood waiting. She wondered how Ethelberta was getting on, and whether she enjoyed herself as much as it seemed her duty to do. Picotee then turned her attention to the hall, every article of furniture therein appearing worthy of scrutiny to her unaccustomed eyes. Here she walked and looked about till an excellent opportunity offered itself of seeing how affairs progressed in the dining-room. Through the partly opened door there became visible a sideboard which first attracted her attention by its richness. It was, indeed, a noticeable example of modern art-workmanship, in being exceptionally large, with curious ebony mouldings at different stages; and, while the heavy cupboard-doors at the bottom were enriched with inlays of paler wood, other panels were decorated with tiles, as if the massive composition had been erected on the spot as part of the solid building. However, it was on a space higher up that Picotee's eyes and thoughts were fixed. In the great mirror above the middle ledge she could see reflected the upper part of the dining-room, and this suggested to her that she might see



Ethelberta in the same way by standing on a chair, which, quick as thought, she did.

To Picotee's dazed young vision her beautiful sister appeared as the chief figure of a glorious pleasure-parliament of both sexes, surrounded by whole regiments of candles grouped here and there about the room. She and her companions were seated before a large flower-bed, or small hanging garden, fixed at about the level of the elbow, the attention of all being concentrated rather upon the uninteresting margin of the bed, and upon each other, than on the beautiful natural objects growing in the middle, as it seemed to Picotee. In the buzz of conversation Ethelberta's clear voice could occasionally be heard, and her young sister could see that her eyes were bright, and her face beaming, as if divers social wants and looming penuriousness had never been within her experience. Mr. Doncastle was quite absorbed in what she was saying. So was the queer old man whom Menlove had called Lord Mountclere.

"The dashing widow looks very well, does she not?" said a person at Picotee's elbow. It was her conductor, whom Picotee had quite forgotten. "She will do some damage here to-night you will find. How long have you been with her?"

"Oh, a long time—I mean rather a short time," stammered Picotee.

"I know her well enough," continued Menlove. "I was her maid once, or rather her mother-in-law's, but that was long before you knew her. I did not by any means find her so lovable as you seem to think her when I had to do with her at close quarters. An awful flirt—awful. Don't you find her so?"

"I don't know."

"If you don't yet you will know. But come down from your perch—the dining-room door will not be open again—and I will show you about the rooms upstairs. This is a larger house than Mrs. Petherwin's, as you see. Just come and look at the drawing-rooms."

Wishing much to get rid of Menlove, yet fearing to offend her, Picotee followed upstairs. Dinner was almost over by this time, and when they entered the front drawing-room a young man-servant and maid were there rekindling the lights.

"Now, let's have a game of cat-and-mice," said the maid-servant, cheerily. "There's plenty of time before they come up."

"Agreed," said Menlove, promptly. "You will play, will you not, Miss Chickere!"

"No, indeed," said Picotee, aghast.

"Never mind, then; you look on."

Away then ran the housemaid and Menlove, and the young footman started at their heels. Round the room, over the furniture, under the furniture, through the furniture, out of one window, along the balcony, in at another window, again round the room—so they glided with the swiftness of swallows and the noiselessness of ghosts. Then the housemaid drew a jew's-harp from her pocket, and struck up a lively

waltz *sotto voce*. The footman seized Menlove, who appeared nothing loth, and began spinning gently round the room with her, to the time of the fascinating measure

Which fashion hails, from countesses to queens,  
And maids and valets dance behind the scenes.

Picotee, who had been accustomed to unceiled country cottages all her life, wherein the scamper of a mouse is heard distinctly from floor to floor, exclaimed, in a terrified whisper at viewing all this, "They'll hear you underneath, they'll hear you, and we shall all be ruined!"

"Not at all," came from the cautious dancers. "These are some of the best built houses in London—double floors, filled in with material that will deaden any row you like to make, and we make none. But come and have a turn yourself, Miss Chickerel."

The young man relinquished Menlove, and on the spur of the moment seized Picotee. Picotee flounced away from him in indignation, backing into a corner with ruffled feathers, like a pullet trying to appear a hen.

"How dare you touch me!" she said, with rounded eyes. "I'll tell somebody downstairs of you, who'll soon see about it."

"What a baby; she'll tell her father."

"No I sha'n't; somebody you are all afraid of, that's who I'll tell."

"Nonsense," said Menlove; "he meant no harm."

Playtime was now getting short, and further antics being dangerous on that account, the performers retired again downstairs, Picotee of necessity following. Her nerves were screwed up to the highest pitch of uneasiness by the grotesque habits of these men and maids, who resembled nothing so much as pixies, elves, or gnomes, peeping up upon human beings from their shady haunts underground, sometimes for good, sometimes for ill—sometimes doing heavy work, sometimes none; teasing and worrying with impish laughter half suppressed, and vanishing directly mortal eyes were bent on them. Separate and distinct from overt existence under the sun, this life could hardly be without its distinctive pleasures, all of them being more or less pervaded by thrills or titillations from games of hazard, and the perpetual risk of sensational surprises.

Long before this time Picotee had begun to be anxious to get home again, but Menlove seemed particularly to desire her company, and pressed her to sit awhile, telling her young friend, by way of entertainment, of various extraordinary love adventures in which she had figured as heroine when travelling on the Continent. These stories had one and all a remarkable likeness in a certain point—Menlove was always unwilling to love the adorer, and the adorer was always unwilling to live afterwards on account of it.

"Ha—ha—ha!" in men's voices was heard from the distant dining-room as the two women went on talking.

"And then," continued Menlove, "there was that duel I was the cause of between the courier and the French valet. Dear me, what a trouble that was; yet I could do nothing to prevent it. This courier was a very handsome man—they are handsome sometimes."

"Yes, they are. My aunt married one."

"Did she? Where do they live?"

"They keep an hotel at Rouen," murmured Picotee, in doubt whether this should have been told or not.

"Well, he used to follow me to the English Church every Sunday regularly, and I was so determined not to give my hand where my heart could never be, that I slipped out at the other door while he stood expecting me by the one I entered. Here I met M. Pierre, when, as ill luck would have it, the other came round the corner, and seeing me talking to the valet, he challenged him at once."

"Ha—ha—ha!" was heard again afar.

"Did they fight?" said Picotee.

"Yes, I believe they did. We left Nice the next day; but I heard some time after of a duel not many miles off, and although I could not get hold of the names, I make no doubt it was between those two gentlemen. I never knew which of them fell; poor fellow, whichever it was."

"Ha—ha—ha—ha—ha!" came from the dining-room.

"Whatever are those boozy men laughing at, I wonder?" said Menlove. "They are always so noisy when the ladies have gone upstairs. Upon my soul, I'll run up and find out."

"No, no, don't," entreated Picotee, putting her hand on her entertainer's arm. "It seems wrong; it is no concern of ours."

"Wrong be hanged—anything on an impulse," said Mrs. Menlove, skipping across the room and out of the door, which stood open, as did others in the house, the evening being sultry and oppressive.

Picotee waited in her seat until it occurred to her that she could escape the lady's-maid by going off into her father's pantry in her absence. But before this had been put into effect Menlove appeared again.

"Such fun as they are having up there," she said. "Somebody asked Mr. Neigh to tell a story which he had told at some previous time, but he was very reluctant to do so, and pretended he could not recollect it. Well, then, the other man—I could not distinguish him by his voice—began telling it, to prompt Mr. Neigh's memory; and, as far as I could understand, it was about some lady who thought Mr. Neigh was in love with her, and to find whether he was worth accepting or not, she went with her maid at night to see his estate, and wandered about and got lost, and was frightened, and I don't know what besides. Then Mr. Neigh laughed too, and said he liked such common sense in a woman. No names were mentioned, but I fancy, from the awkwardness of Mr. Neigh at being compelled to tell it, that the lady is one of those in the drawing-room. I should like to know which it was."

"I know—have heard something about it," said Picotee, blushing with anger. "It was nothing at all like that. I wonder Mr. Neigh had the audacity ever to talk of the matter, and to misrepresent it so greatly."

"Tell all about it, do," said Menlove.

"Oh no," said Picotee. "I promised not to say a word."

The flighty Menlove pressed her to tell, but finding this useless the subject was changed. Presently her father came in, and, taking no notice of Menlove, told his daughter that she had been called for. Picotee very readily put on her things, and on going outside found Joey awaiting her. Mr. Chickereel followed closely, with sharp glances from the corner of his eye, and it was plain from Joey's nervous manner of lingering in the shadows of the doorway instead of entering the house, that the butler had in some way set himself to prevent all communion between the fair tiring-woman and his son for that evening at least.

He watched Picotee and her brother off the premises, and the pair went on their way towards Connaught Crescent, very few words passing between them. Picotee's thoughts had turned to the proposed visit to Knollsea, and Joey was sulky under disappointment, and the blank of thwarted purposes.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

##### ON THE HOUSETOP.

"PICOTEE, are you asleep?" Ethelberta whispered softly at dawn the next morning, by the half-opened door of her sister's bedroom.

"No, I keep waking; it is so warm."

"So do I. Suppose we get up and see the sun rise. The east is filling with flame."

"Yes, I should like it," said Picotee.

The restlessness which had brought Ethelberta hither in slippers and dressing-gown at such an early hour owed its origin to other causes than the warmth of the weather, but of that she did not speak as yet. Picotee's room was an attic, with windows in the roof—a chamber dismal enough at all times, and very shadowy now. While Picotee was wrapping up Ethelberta placed a chair under the window, and mounting upon this they stepped outside, and seated themselves within the parapet. The air was as clear and fresh as on a mountain side; sparrows chattered, and birds of a species unsuspected at later hours could be heard singing in the park hard by, while here and there on ridges and flats a cat might be seen going calmly home from the devilries of the night to resume the amiabilities of the day.

"I am so sorry I was asleep when you reached home," said Picotee.

"I was so anxious to tell you something I heard of, and to know what you did; but my eyes would shut, try as I might, and then I tried no longer. Did you see me at all, Berta?"

"Never once. I had an impression that you were there; I fancied you were from father's carefully vacuous look whenever I glanced at his face. But were you careful about what you said, and did you see Menlove? I felt all the time that I had done wrong in letting you come; the gratification to you was not worth the risk to me."

"I saw her, and talked to her. But I am certain she suspected nothing. I enjoyed myself very much, and there was no risk at all."

"I am glad it is no worse news. However, you must not go there again; upon that point I am determined."

"It was a good thing I did go, all the same. I'll tell you why, when you have told me what happened to you."

"Nothing of importance happened to me."

"I expect you got to know the lord you were to meet."

"O yes—Lord Mountclere."

"And it's dreadful how fond he is of you—quite ridiculously taken up with you—I saw that well enough. Such an old man, too; I wouldn't have him for the world."

"Don't jump at conclusions so absurdly, Picotee. Why wouldn't you have him for the world?"

"Because he is old enough to be my grandfather, and yours, too."

"Indeed he is not; he is only middle-aged."

"O Berta! Sixty-five at least."

"He may or may not be that; and if he is, it is not old. He is so entertaining that one forgets all about age in connection with him."

"He laughs like this—'Hee-hee-hee!'" Picotee introduced as much antiquity into her face as she could by screwing it up and suiting the action to the word.

"This very odd thing occurred," said Ethelberta, to get Picotee off the track of Lord Mountclere's peculiarities, as it seemed. "I was saying to Mr. Neigh that we were going to Knollsea for a time, feeling that he would not be likely to know anything about such an out-of-the-way place, when Lord Mountclere, who was near, said, 'I shall be at Lychworth Court in a few days, probably at the time you are at Knollsea. The Imperial Archaeological Association hold their meetings in that part of Wessex this season, and Coomb Castle, near Knollsea, is one of the places on our list.' Then he hoped I should be able to attend. Did you ever hear anything so strange? Now, I should like to attend very much, not on Lord Mountclere's account, but because such gatherings are interesting, and I have never been to one; yet there is this to be considered, would it be right for me to go without a friend to such a place? Another point is, that we shall live in menagerie style at Knollsea for the sake of the children, and we must do it economically in case we accept Aunt Charlotte's invitation to Rouen; hence, if he or his friends find us out there it will be awkward for me. So the alternative is, Knollsea or some other place for us?"

"Let it be Knollsea, now we have once settled it," said Picotee, anxiously. "I have mentioned to Faith Julian that we shall be there."

"Mentioned it already? You must have written instantly."

"I had a few minutes to spare, and I thought I might as well write."

"Very well; we will stick to Knollsea," said Ethelberta, half in doubt. "Yes—otherwise it will be difficult to see about aunt's baptismal

certificate. We will hope nobody will take the trouble to pry into our household. . . . And now Picotee, I want to ask you something—something very serious. How would you like me to marry Mr. Neigh ?” Ethelberta could not help laughing with a faint shyness as she asked the question under the searching east ray. “He has asked me to marry him,” she continued, “and I want to know what you would say to such an arrangement. I don’t mean to imply that the event is certain to take place ; but, as a mere supposition, what do you say to it, Picotee ?” Ethelberta was far from putting this matter before Picotee for advice or opinion ; but, like all people who have an innate dislike to hole-and-corner policy, she felt compelled to speak of it to some one.

“I should not like him for you at all,” said Picotee, vehemently. “I would rather you had Mr. Ladywell.”

“Oh, don’t name him !”

“I wouldn’t have Mr. Neigh at any price, nevertheless. It is about him that I was going to tell you.” Picotee proceeded to relate Menlove’s account of the story of Ethelberta’s escapade, which had been dragged from Neigh the previous evening by the friend to whom he had related it before he was so enamoured of Ethelberta as to regard that performance as a positive virtue in her. “Nobody was told, or even suspected, who the lady of the anecdote was,” Picotee concluded ; “but I knew instantly, of course, and I think it very unfortunate that we ever went to that dreadful ghostly estate of his, Berta.”

Ethelberta’s face heated with mortification. She had no fear that Neigh had told names or other particulars which might lead to her identification by any friend of his, and she could make allowance for bursts of confidence ; but there remained the awkward fact that he himself knew her to be the heroine of the episode. What annoyed her most was that Neigh could ever have looked upon her indiscretion as a humorous incident, which he certainly must have done at some time or other to account for his telling it. Had he been angry with her, or sneered at her for going, she could have forgiven him ; but to see her manœuvre in the light of a joke, to use it as illustrating his grim theory of woman-kind, and neither to like nor to dislike her the more for it from first to last, this was to treat her with a cynicism which was intolerable. That Neigh’s use of the incident as a stock anecdote ceased long before he had decided to ask her to marry him she made no doubt, but it showed that his love for her was of that sort in which passion makes war upon judgment, and prevails in spite of will. Moreover, he might have been speaking ironically when he alluded to the act as a virtue in a woman, which seemed the more likely when she remembered his cool bearing towards her in the drawing-room. Possibly it was an antipathetic reaction induced by the renewed recollection of her proceeding.

“I will never marry Mr. Neigh !” she said with decision. “You need not think over any such contingency, Picotee. He is one of those horrid men who love with their eyes, the remainder part of him objecting all



the time to the feeling ; and even if his objections prove the weaker, and the man marries, his general nature conquers again by the time the wedding trip is over, so that the woman is miserable at last, and had better not have had him at all."

"That applies still more to Lord Mountclere, to my thinking. I never saw anything like the look of his eyes upon you."

"Oh, no, no—you understand nothing if you say that. But one thing be sure of, there is no marriage likely to take place between myself and Mr. Neigh. I have longed for a sound reason for disliking him, and now I have got it. Well, we will talk no more of this—let us think of the nice little pleasure we have in store—our stay at Knollsea. There we will be as free as the wind. And when we are down there, I can drive across to Coomb Castle if I wish to attend the Imperial Association meeting, and nobody will know where I came from. Knollsea is not more than five miles from the Castle, I think."

Picotee was by this time beginning to yawn, and Ethelberta did not feel nearly so wakeful as she had felt half-an-hour earlier. Tall and swarthy columns of smoke were now soaring up from the kitchen chimneys around, spreading horizontally when at a great height, and forming a roof of haze which was turning the sun to a copper colour, and by degrees spoiling the sweetness of the new atmosphere that had rolled in from the country during the night, giving it the usual city smell. The resolve to make this rising the beginning of a long and busy day, which should set them beforehand with the rest of the world, weakened with their growing weariness, and an impulse to lie down just for a quarter of an hour before dressing ended in a sound sleep that did not relinquish its hold upon them till late in the forenoon.

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#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### KNOLLSEA—A LOFTY DOWN—A RUINED CASTLE.

KNOLLSEA was a seaside village lying snug within two headlands as between a finger and thumb. Everybody in the parish who was not a boatman was a quarrier, unless he were the gentleman who owned half the property and had been a quarryman, or the other gentleman who owned the other half, and had been to sea.

The knowledge of the inhabitants was of the same special sort as their pursuits. The quarrymen in white fustian understood practical geology, the laws and accidents of dips, faults, and cleavage, better than the simplest ways of the world and mammon ; the men in Guernsey frocks had a clearer notion of Alexandria, Constantinople, the Cape, and the Indies than of any inland town in their own country, which, for them, consisted of a busy portion, the Channel, where they lived and laboured, and a dull portion, the vague unexplored miles of interior at the back of the ports, which was never visited.

Some wives of the village, it is true, had learned to let lodgings, and others to keep shops. The doors of these little places were formed of an upper hatch, usually kept open, and a lower hatch, with a bell attached, usually kept shut. Whenever a stranger went in, he would hear a whispering of astonishment from a back room, after which a woman came forward, looking suspiciously at him as an intruder, and advancing slowly enough to allow her mouth to get cleared of the meal she was partaking of. Meanwhile the people in the back room would stop their knives and forks in absorbed curiosity as to the reason of the stranger's entry, who by this time feels ashamed of his unwarrantable intrusion into this hermit's cell, and thinks he must take his hat off. The woman is quite alarmed at seeing that he is not one of the fifteen native women and children who alone patronise her, and nervously puts her hand to the side of her face, which she carries slanting. The visitor finds himself saying what he wants in an apologetic tone, when the woman tells him that they did keep that article once, but do not now; that nobody does, and probably never will again; and as he turns away she looks relieved that the dilemma of having to provide for a stranger has passed off with no worse mishaps than that of disappointing him.

A cottage which stood on a high slope above this townlet and its bay resounded one morning with the notes of a merry company. Ethelberta had managed to find room for herself and her young relations in the house of one of the boatmen, whose wife attended upon them all, Captain Flower, her husband, assisting her in the dinner preparations, when he slipped about the house as lightly as a girl and spoke of himself as cook's mate. The house was so small that the sailor's rich voice, developed by shouting in high winds during a twenty years' experience in the coasting trade, could be heard coming from the kitchen between the chirpings of the children in the parlour. The furniture of this apartment consisted mostly of the painting of a full-rigged ship, done by a man whom the captain had specially selected for the purpose because he had been seven-and-twenty years at sea before touching a brush, and thereby offered a sufficient guarantee that he understood how to paint a vessel properly.

Before this picture sat Ethelberta in a light linen dress, and with tightly-knotted hair—now again Berta Chickereel as of old—serving out breakfast to the rest of the party, and sometimes lifting her eyes to the outlook from the window, which presented a happy combination of grange scenery with marine. Upon the irregular slope between the house and the quay was an orchard of aged trees wherein every apple ripening on the boughs presented its rubicund side towards the cottage, because it chanced to lie upwards in the same direction as the sun. Under the trees were a few Cape sheep, and over them the stone chimneys of the village below: outside these lay the tanned sails of a ketch or smack, and the violet waters of the bay, seamed and creased by breezes insufficient to raise waves: beyond all a curved wall of cliff, terminating in a promontory, which was flanked by tall and shining obelisks of chalk rising sheer

from the trembling blue race beneath. Sitting in the room commanding this prospect a white butterfly among the apple-trees might be mistaken for the sails of a yacht far away on the sea; and in the evening, when the light was dim, what seemed like a fly crawling upon the window-pane would turn out to be a boat in the bay.

When breakfast was over, Ethelberta sat leaning on the window-sill considering her movements for the day. It was the time fixed for the meeting of the Imperial Association at Coomb Castle, the celebrated ruin five miles off, and the meeting had some fascinations for her. For one thing, she had never been present at a gathering of the kind, although what was left in any shape from the past was her constant interest, because it recalled her to herself and fortified her mind. Persons waging a harassing social fight are apt in the interest of the combat to forget the smallness of the end in view; and the hints that perishing historical remnants afforded her of the attenuating effects of time even upon great struggles corrected the apparent scale of her own. She was reminded that in a strife for such a ludicrously small object as the entry of drawing-rooms, winning, equally with losing, is below the zero of the true philosopher's concern.

There could never be a more excellent reason than this for going to view the meagre stumps remaining from flourishing bygone centuries, and it had weight with Ethelberta this very day; but it would be difficult to state the whole composition of her motive. The approaching meeting had been one of the great themes at Mr. Doncastle's dinner-party, and Lord Mountclere, on learning that she was to be at Knollsea, had recommended her attendance at some, if not all of the meetings, as a desirable and exhilarating change after her laborious season's work in town. It was pleasant to have won her way so far in high places that her health of body and mind should be thus considered—pleasant, less as personal gratification, than that it casually reflected a proof of her good judgment in a matter for which everybody among her kindred had condemned her by calling it a foolhardy undertaking.

And she might go without the restraint of ceremony. Unconventionality—almost eccentricity—was *de rigueur* for one who had been first heard of as a poetess; from whose red lips magic romance had since trilled for weeks to crowds of listeners, as from a perennial spring.

So Ethelberta went, after a considerable pondering how to get there without the needless sacrifice either of dignity or cash. It would be inconsiderate to the children to spend a pound on a brougham when as much as she could spare was wanted for their holiday. It was almost too far to walk. She had, however, decided to walk, when she met a boy with a donkey, who offered to lend it to her for three shillings. The animal was rather sad-looking, but Ethelberta found she could sit upon the pad without discomfort. Considering that she might pull up some distance short of the castle, and leave the ass at a cottage before joining her four-wheeled friends, she struck the bargain and rode on her way.

This was, first by a path on the shore where the tide dragged huskily up and down the shingle without disturbing it, and thence up the steep crest of land opposite, whereon she lingered awhile to let the ass breathe. On one of the spires of chalk into which the hill here had been split was perched a cormorant, silent and motionless, with wings spread out to dry in the sun after his morning's fishing, their wet surface shining like mail. Retiring without disturbing him and turning to the left along the lofty ridge which ran inland, the country on each side lay beneath her like a map, domains behind domains, parishes by the score, harbours, fir-woods, and little inland seas mixing curiously together. She ambled along through a huge cemetery of barrows, containing human dust from pre-historic times, and found fragments of flint implements and arrowheads, which even now the weather had not abraded beyond recognition as tools and weapons. Standing on the top of a giant's grave in this antique land, she lifted her eyes to behold two sorts of weather pervading Nature at the same time. Far below on the right hand it was a fine day, where the silver sunbeams lighted up a many-armed inland sea which stretched round an island with fir-trees and gorse, and amid brilliant crimson heaths where white paths and roads occasionally met the eye in dashes and zigzags like flashes of lightning. Outside, where the broad Channel appeared, a berylline and opalized variegation of ripples, currents, deeps, and shallows, lay as fair under the sun as a New Jerusalem, the shores being of gleaming sand. Upon the radiant heather bees and butterflies were busy, she knew, and the birds on that side were just beginning their autumn songs. On the left, quite up to her position, was dark and cloudy weather, shading a valley of heavy greens and browns, which at its further side rose to meet the sea in tall cliffs, suggesting even here at their back how terrible were their aspects seaward in a growling south-west gale. Here grassed hills rose like knuckles gloved in dark-olive, and little plantations between them formed a still deeper and sadder monochrome. A zinc sky met a leaden sea on this hand, the low wind groaned and whined, and not a bird sang.

The ridge along which Ethelberta rode divided these two climates like a wall; it soon became apparent that they were wrestling for mastery immediately in her pathway. The issue long remained doubtful, and this being an imaginative hour with her, she watched as typical of her own fortunes how the front of battle swayed—now to the west, flooding her with sun, now to the east, covering her with shade: then the wind moved round to the north, a blue hole appeared in the overhanging cloud, at about the place of the north star; and the sunlight spread on both sides of her.

The towers of the notable ruin to be visited rose out of the furthest-most shoulder of the upland as she advanced, its site being the slope and crest of a smoothly nibbled mount at the toe of the ridge she had followed. When observing the previous uncertainty of the weather on this side, Ethelberta had been led to doubt if the meeting would be held here

to-day, and she was now strengthened in her opinion that it would not by the total absence of human figures amid the ruins, though the time of appointment was past. This disposed of another question which had perplexed her, where to find a stable for the ass during the meeting, for she had scarcely liked the idea of facing the whole body of lords and gentlemen upon the animal's back. She now decided to retain her seat, ride round the ruin, and go home again, without troubling further about the movements of the Association or acquaintance with the members composing it.

Accordingly Ethelberta crossed the bridge over the moat, and rode under the first archway into the outer ward. As she had expected, not a soul was here. The arrow-slits, portcullis-grooves, and staircases met her eye as familiar friends, for in her childhood she had once paid a visit to the spot. Ascending the green incline and through another arch into the second ward, she dismounted, and tying the ass to a stone which projected like an eye-tooth from a raw edge of wall, performed the remainder of the ascent on foot. Once among the towers above, she became so interested in the windy corridors, mildewed dungeons, and the tribe of daws peering invidiously upon her from overhead, that she forgot the flight of time. Nearly three-quarters of an hour passed before she came out from the immense walls, and looked from an opening to the front over the wide expanse of the outer ward, by which she had ascended.

Here Ethelberta was taken aback to see a cloud of drapery of many colours, blue, buff, pied, and black, that had burst from a file of shining carriages during her seclusion in the keep, and was creeping up the incline. It parted into fragments, dived into old doorways, and lost substance behind projecting piles. Recognising in this the ladies and gentlemen of the meeting, her first thought was how to escape, for she was suddenly overcome with dread to meet them all single-handed as she stood. She drew back and hurried round to the side, as the laughter and voices of the assembly began to be audible, and, more than ever vexed that she could not have fallen in with them in some unobtrusive way, Ethelberta found that they were immediately beneath her. Venturing to peep forward again, what was her mortification at finding them gathered in a ring, round no object of interest belonging to the ruin, but round her faithful beast, which had loosened itself in some way from the stone, and stood in the middle of a plat of grass, placidly regarding them.

Being now in the teeth of the Association, there was nothing to do but to go on. She made the best of it, and began to descend in the broad view of the assembly, from the midst of which proceeded a laugh—"Hee-hee-hee!" Ethelberta knew that Lord Mountclere was there.

"The poor thing has strayed from its owner," said one lady, as they all stood looking at the phenomenal ass.

"It may belong to some of the villagers," said the President, in a historical voice: "and it may be appropriate to mention that many were kept here in olden times: they were largely used as beasts of burden in



victualling the castle previous to the last siege, in the year sixteen hundred and forty-five."

"It is very weary, and has come a long way, I think," said a lady; adding, in an imaginative tone, "the humble creature looks so aged and is so quaintly saddled that we may suppose it to be only an animated relic of the same date as the other remains."

By this time Lord Mountclere had noticed Ethelberta's presence, and straightening himself to ten years younger, he lifted his hat and came up jauntily. It was a good time now to see what the viscount was really like. He appeared to be about sixty-five, and the dignified aspect which he wore to a gazer at a distance became depreciated to jocund slyness upon nearer view, when the small type could be read between the leading lines. Then it could be seen that his upper lip dropped to a point in the middle, as if impressing silence upon his too demonstrative lower one. His right and left profiles were different, one corner of his mouth being more compressed than the other, producing a deep line thence downwards to the side of his chin. Each eyebrow rose obliquely outwards and upwards, and was thus far above the little eye, shining with the clearness of a pond that has just been able to weather the heats of summer. Below this was a preternaturally fat jowl, which, by thrusting against cheeks and chin, caused the arch old mouth to be almost buried at the corners.

A few words of greeting passed, and Ethelberta told him how she was fearing to meet them all, united and primed with their morning's knowledge as they appeared to be.

"Well, we have not done much yet," he said. "As for myself, I have given no thought at all to our day's work. I had not forgotten your promise to attend, if you could possibly drive across, and—hee-hee-hee!—I have frequently looked towards the hill where the road descends . . . Will you now permit me to introduce some of my party—as many of them as you care to know by name? I think they would all like to speak to you."

Ethelberta then found herself nominally made known to ten or a dozen ladies and gentlemen who had wished for special acquaintance with her. She stood there, as all women stand who have made themselves remarkable by their originality, or devotion to any singular cause, as a person freed of her hampering and inconvenient sex, and, by virtue of her popularity, unfettered from the conventionalities of manner prescribed by custom for household womankind. The charter to move abroad unchaperoned, which society for good reasons grants only to women of three sorts—the famous, the ministering, and the improper—Ethelberta was in a fair way to make splendid use of: instead of walking in protected lanes she experienced that luxury of isolation which normally is enjoyed by men alone, in conjunction with the attention naturally bestowed on a woman young and fair. Among the presentations were Mr. and Mrs. Tynn, member and member's mainspring for North Wessex; Sir Cyril



and Lady Blandsbury; Lady Jane Joy; the Honourable Edgar Mountclere, the viscount's younger brother; also the learned Doctor Yore; Mr. Small, a talented writer, who never printed his works; the Reverend Mr. Brook, Rector; the Very Reverend Dr. Taylor, Dean; and the rather reverend Mr. Tinkleton, Nonconformist, who had slipped into the fold by chance.

These and others looked with interest at Ethelberta; the old county fathers hard, as at a questionable town phenomenon, the county sons tenderly, as at a pretty creature, and the county daughters with great admiration, as at a lady reported by their mammas to be no better than she should be. It will be seen that Ethelberta was the sort of woman that well-rooted local people might like to look at on such a free and friendly occasion as an archaeological meeting, where, to gratify a pleasant whim, the picturesque form of acquaintance is for the nonce preferred to the useful, the spirits being so brisk as to swerve from strict attention to the select and sequent gifts of heaven, blood and acres, to consider for an idle moment the unstable subversive ether, brains.

"Our progress in the survey of the castle has not been far as yet," Lord Mountclere resumed; "indeed, we have only just arrived, the weather this morning being so unsettled. When you came up we were engaged in a preliminary study of the poor animal you see there: how it could have got up here we cannot understand."

He pointed as he spoke to the donkey which had brought Ethelberta thither, whereupon she was silent and gazed at her untoward beast as if she had never before beheld him.

The ass looked at Ethelberta as though he would say, "Why don't you own me, after safely bringing you over those weary hills?" But the pride and emulation which had made her what she was would not permit her, as the beautifullest woman there, to take upon her own shoulders the ridicule which had already been cast upon the ass. Had he been young and gaily caparisoned, she might have done it; but his age, the clumsy trappings of rustic make, and his needy woful look of hard servitude, were too much to endure.

"Many come and picnic here," she said, serenely, "and the animal may have been left till they return from some walk."

"True," said Lord Mountclere, without the slightest suspicion of the truth. The humble ass hung his head in his usual manner, and it demanded little fancy from Ethelberta to imagine that he despised her. And then her mind flew back to her history and extraction, to her father—perhaps at that moment inventing a private plate-powder in an underground pantry—and with a groan at her inconsistency in being ashamed of the ass, she said in her heart, "My God, what a thing am I!"

They then all moved round to another part of the castle, and as they went indiscriminately mingled, jesting lightly or talking in earnest, she beheld ahead of her the form of Neigh among the rest.

Now, there could only be one reason on earth for Neigh's presence—

her remark that she might attend—for Neigh took no more interest in antiquities than in the back of the moon. Ethelberta was a little flurried; perhaps he had come to scold her, or to treat her badly in that indefinable way of his by which he could make a woman feel as nothing without any direct act at all. She was afraid of him, and, determining to shun him, was thankful that Lord Mountclere was near, to take off the edge of Neigh's manner towards her if he approached.

"Do you know in what part of the ruins the lecture is to be given?" she said to the viscount.

"Wherever you like," he replied gallantly. "Do you propose a place, and I will get Dr. Yore to adopt it. Say, shall it be here, or where they are standing?"

How could Ethelberta refrain from exercising a little power when it was put into her hands in this way?

"Let it be here," she said, "if it makes no difference to the meeting."

"It shall be," said Lord Mountclere.

And then the lively old nobleman skipped like a roe to the President and to Dr. Yore, who was to read the paper on the castle, and they soon appeared coming back to where the viscount's party and Ethelberta were beginning to seat themselves. The bulk of the company followed, and Dr. Yore began.

He must have had a countenance of leather—as, indeed, from his colour he appeared to have—to stand unmoved in his position, and read, and look up to give explanations, without a change of muscle, under the dozens of bright eyes that were there converged upon him, like the sticks of a fan, from the ladies who sat round him in a semicircle upon the grass. However, he went on calmly, and the women sheltered themselves from the heat with their umbrellas and sun-shades, their ears lulled by the hum of insects, and by the drone of the doctor's voice. The reader buzzed on with the history of the castle, tracing its development from a mound with a few earthworks to its condition in Norman times; he related monkish marvels connected with the spot; its resistance under Matilda to Stephen, its probable shape while a residence of King John, and the sad story of the Damsel of Brittany, sister of his victim Arthur, who was confined here in company with the two daughters of Alexander, king of Scotland. He went on to recount the confinement of Edward II. herein, previous to his murder at Berkeley, the gay doings in the reign of Elizabeth, and so downward through time to the final overthrow of the stern old pile. As he proceeded, the lecturer pointed with his finger at the various features appertaining to the date of his story, which he told with splendid vigour when he had warmed to his work, till his narrative, particularly in the conjectural and romantic parts, where it became coloured rather by the speaker's imagination than by the pigments of history, gathered together the wandering thoughts of all. It was easy for him then to meet those fair concentrated eyes, when the sun-shades were thrown back, and complexions forgotten, in the interest of the history.

The doctor's face was then no longer criticised as a rugged boulder, a dried fig, an oak carving, or a walnut shell, but became blotted out like a mountain top in a shining haze by the nebulous pictures conjured by his tale.

Then the lecture ended, and questions were asked, and individuals of the company wandered at will, the light dresses of the ladies sweeping over the hot grass, and brushing up thistledown which had hitherto lain quiescent, so that it rose in a flight from the skirts of each like a comet's tail.

Some of Lord Mountclere's party, including himself and Ethelberta, wandered now into a cool dungeon, partly open to the air overhead, where long arms of ivy hung between their eyes and the white sky. While they were here, Lady Jane Joy and some other friends of the viscount told Ethelberta that they were probably coming on to Knollsea.

She instantly perceived that getting into close quarters in that way might be very inconvenient, considering the youngsters she had under her charge, and straightway decided upon a point that she had debated for several days—a visit to her aunt in Normandy. In London it had been a mere thought, but the Channel had looked so tempting from its brink that the journey was virtually fixed as soon as she reached Knollsea, and found that a little pleasure steamer crossed to Cherbourg once a week during the summer, so that she would not have to enter the crowded routes at all.

"I am afraid I shall not see you in Knollsea," she said. "I am about to go to Cherbourg and then to Rouen."

"How sorry I am. When do you leave?"

"At the beginning of next week," said Ethelberta, settling the time there and then.

"Did I hear you say that you were going to Cherbourg and Rouen?" Lord Mountclere inquired.

"I think to do so," said Ethelberta.

"I am going to Normandy myself," said a voice behind her, and without turning she knew that Neigh was standing there.

They next went outside, and Lord Mountclere offered Ethelberta his arm on the ground of assisting her down the burnished grass slope. Ethelberta, taking pity upon him, gave it; but the assistance was all on her side, for she stood like a statue amid his slips and totterings, some of which taxed her strength heavily, and her ingenuity more, to appear as the supported and not the supporter. The incident brought Neigh still further from his retirement, and she learnt that he was one of a yachting party which had put in at Knollsea that morning; she was greatly relieved to find that he was just now on his way to London, whence he would probably proceed on his journey abroad.

Ethelberta adhered as well as she could to her resolve that Neigh should not speak with her alone, but by dint of perseverance he did manage to address her without being overheard.

"Will you give me an answer?" said Neigh. "I have come on purpose."

"I cannot just now. I have been led to doubt you."

"Doubt me? What new wrong have I done?"

"Spoken jestingly of my visit to Harefield."

"Good!—I did not speak or think of you. When I named that incident I had no idea who the lady was—I did not know it was you till two days later, and I at once held my tongue. I vow to you upon my soul and life that what I say is true. How shall I prove my truth better than by my errand here?"

"Don't speak of this now. I am so occupied with other things. I am going to Rouen, and will think of it on my way."

"I am going there too. When do you go?"

"I shall be in Rouen next Wednesday, I hope."

"May I ask where?"

"Hotel Beau Sejour."

"Will you give me an answer there? I can easily call upon you. It is now a month and more since you first led me to hope——."

"I did not lead you to hope—at any rate, directly."

"Indirectly you did. And although I am willing to be as considerate as any man ought to be in giving you time to think over the question, there is a limit to my patience. Any necessary delay I will put up with, but I won't be trifled with. I hate all nonsense, and can't stand it."

"Indeed. Good morning."

"But Mrs. Petherwin—just one word."

"I have nothing to say."

"I will meet you at Rouen for an answer. I would meet you in Hades for the matter of that. Remember this: next Wednesday, if I live, I shall call upon you at Rouen."

She did not say nay.

"May I?" he added.

"If you will."

"But say it shall be an appointment."

"Very well."

Lord Mountclere was by this time toddling towards them to ask if they would come on to his house, Lychworth Court, not very far distant, to lunch with the rest of the party. Neigh, having already arranged to go on to town that afternoon, was obliged to decline, and Ethelberta thought fit to do the same, idly asking Lord Mountclere if Lychworth Court lay in the direction of a gorge that was visible where they stood.

"No; considerably to the left," he said. "The opening you are looking at would reveal the sea if it were not for the trees that block the way. Ah, those trees have a history; they are half a dozen elms which I planted myself when I was a boy. How time flies!"

"It is unfortunate they stand just so as to cover the blue bit of sea. That addition would double the value of the view from here."

"You would prefer the blue sea to the trees?"

"In that particular spot I should; they might have looked just as well, and yet have hidden nothing worth seeing. The narrow slit of sea would have been invaluable there."

"They shall fall before the sun sets, in deference to your opinion," said Lord Mountclere.

"That would be rash indeed," said Ethelberta laughing, "when my opinion on such a point may be worth nothing whatever."

"Where no other is acted upon, it is practically the universal one," he replied gaily.

And then Ethelberta's elderly admirer bade her adieu, and away the whole party drove in a long train over the hills towards the valley wherein stood Lychworth Court.

She watched them out of sight, and she also saw the rest depart—those who, their interest in archæology having begun and ended with this spot, had, like herself, declined the hospitable viscount's invitation, and started to drive or walk at once home again. Thereupon the castle was quite deserted except by Ethelberta, the ass, and the jackdaws, now floundering at ease again in and about the ivy of the keep.

Not wishing to enter Knollsea till the evening shades were falling, she still walked amid the ruins, examining more leisurely some points which the stress of keeping herself companionable would not allow her to attend to while the assemblage was present. At the end of the survey, being somewhat weary with her clambering, she sat down on the slope commanding the gorge where the trees grew, to make a pencil sketch of the landscape as it was revealed between the ragged walls. Thus engaged she weighed the circumstances of Lord Mountclere's invitation, and could not be certain if it were prudishness or simple propriety in herself which had instigated her to refuse. She would have liked the visit for many reasons, and if Lord Mountclere had been anybody but a remarkably attentive old widower, she would have gone. As it was, it had occurred to her that there was something in his tone which should lead her to hesitate. Was anyone among the elderly or married ladies who had appeared upon the ground in a detached form as she had done—and many had appeared thus—invited to Lychworth; and if not, why were they not? That Lord Mountclere admired her, there was no doubt, and for this reason it behoved her to be careful. His disappointment at parting from her was, in one aspect, simply laughable, from its odd resemblance to the unfeigned sorrow of a boy of fifteen at a first parting from his first love: in another aspect it caused reflection; and she thought again of his curiosity about her doings for the remainder of the summer.

While she sketched and thought thus, she perceived a movement in the gorge. One of the trees forming the curtain across it began to wave strangely: it went further to one side, and fell. Where the tree had stood was now a rent in the foliage, and through the narrow rent could be seen the distant sea.



Æthelberta uttered a soft exclamation. It was not caused by the surprise she had felt, nor by the intrinsic interest of the sight, nor by want of comprehension. It was a sudden realization of vague things hitherto dreamed of from a distance only—a sense of novel power put into her hands without request or expectation. A landscape was to be altered to suit her whim. She had in her lifetime moved essentially larger mountains, but they had seemed of far less splendid material than this; for it was the nature of the gratification rather than its magnitude which enchanted the fancy of a woman whose poetry, in spite of her necessities, was hardly yet extinguished. But there was something more, with which poetry had little to do. Whether the opinion of any pretty woman in England was of more weight with Lord Mountclere than memories of his boyhood, or whether that distinction was reserved for her alone; this was a point that she would have liked to know.

The enjoyment of power in a new element, an enjoyment somewhat resembling in kind that which is given by a first ride or swim, held Æthelberta to the spot, and she waited, but sketched no more. Another tree-top swayed and vanished as before, and the slit of sea was larger still. Her mind and eye were so occupied with this matter that sitting in her nook she did not observe a thin young man, his boots white with the dust of a long journey on foot, who arrived at the castle by the valley-road from Knollsea. He looked awhile at the pile, and skirting its flank instead of entering by the great gateway, climbed up the scarp and walked in through a breach. After standing for a moment among the walls, now silent and apparently empty, with a disappointed look he descended the slope, and proceeded along his way. Æthelberta, who was in quite another part of the castle, saw the black spot diminishing to the size of a fly as he receded along the dusty road, and soon after she descended on the other side, where she remounted the ass, and ambled homeward as she had come, in no bright mood. What, seeing the precariousness of her state, was the day's triumph worth after all, unless, before her beauty abated, she could ensure her position against the attacks of chance?

To be thus is nothing;

But to be safely thus;

—she said it more than once on her journey that day.

On entering the sitting-room of their cot up the hill she found it empty, and, from a change perceptible in the position of small articles of furniture, something unusual seemed to have taken place in her absence. The dwelling being of that sort in which whatever goes on in one room is audible in all the rest, Picotee, who was upstairs, heard the arrival and came down. Picotee's face was rosed over with the brilliance of some excitement. "What do you think I have to tell you, Berta?" she said.

"I have no idea," said her sister. "Surely," she added, her face intensifying to a wan sadness, "Mr. Julian has not been here?"

"Yes," said Picotee. "And we went down to the sands—he, and Myrtle, and Georgina, and Emmeline, and I—and Cornelia came down



when she had put away the dinner. And then we dug wriggles out of the sand with Myrtle's spade: we got such a lot, and had such fun; they are in a dish in the kitchen. Mr. Julian came to see you; but at last he could wait no longer, and when I told him you were at the meeting in the castle ruins he said he would try to find you there on his way home, if he could get there before the meeting broke up."

"Then it was he I saw far away on the road—yes, it must have been." She remained in gloomy reverie a few moments, and then said, "Very well—let it be. Picotee, get me some tea: I do not want dinner."

But the news of Christopher's visit seemed to have taken away her appetite for tea also, and after sitting a little while she flung herself down upon the couch, and told Picotee that she had settled to go and see their aunt Charlotte.

"I am going to write to Sol and Dan to ask them to meet me there," she added. "I want them, if possible, to see Paris. It will improve them greatly in their trades, I am thinking, if they can see the kinds of joinery and decoration practised in France. They agreed to go, if I should wish it, before we left London. You, of course, will go as my maid."

Picotee gazed upon the sea with a crestfallen look, as if she would rather not cross it in any capacity just then.

"It would scarcely be worth going to the expense of taking me, would it?" she said.

The cause of Picotee's sudden sense of economy was so plain that her sister smiled; but young love, however foolish, is to a thinking person far too tragic a power for ridicule; and Ethelberta forbore, going on as if Picotee had not spoken: "I must have you with me. I may be seen there: so many are passing through Rouen at this time of the year. Cornelia can take excellent care of the children while we are gone. I want to get out of England, and I will get out of England. There is nothing but vanity and vexation here."

"I am sorry you were away when he called," said Picotee, gently.

"Oh, I don't mean that. I wish there were no different ranks in the world, and that contrivance were not a necessary faculty to have at all. Well, we are going to cross by the little steamer that puts in here, and we are going on Monday." She added in another minute, "What had Mr. Julian to tell us, that he came here? How did he find us out?"

"I mentioned that we were coming here in my letter to Faith. Mr. Julian says that perhaps he and his sister may come here for a few days before the season is over. I should like to see Miss Julian again. She is such a nice girl."

"Yes." Ethelberta played with her hair, and looked at the ceiling as she reclined. "I have decided after all," she said, "that it will be better to take Cornelia as my maid, and leave you here with the children. Cornelia is stronger as a companion than you, and she will be delighted to go. Do

you think you are competent to keep Myrtle and Georgina out of harm's way?"

"Oh yes—I will be exceedingly careful," said Picotee, with great vivacity. "And if there is time I can go on teaching them a little." Then Picotee caught Ethelberta's eye, and colouring red, sank down beside her sister, whispering, "I know why it is. But if you would rather have me with you I will go, and not once wish to stay."

Ethelberta smiled, as if she knew all about that, and said, "Of course there will be no necessity to tell the Julians about my departure until they have fixed the time for coming."

The sound of the children with Cornelia, and their appearance outside the window, pushing between the fuschia bushes which overhung the path, put an end to this dialogue; they entered armed with buckets and spades, a very moist and sandy aspect pervading them as far up as the high-water mark of their clothing, and began to tell Ethelberta of the wonders of the deep.

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### A ROOM IN Lychworth Court.

"ARE you sure the report is true?"

"I am sure that what I say is true, my lord; but it is hardly to be called a report. It is a secret, known at present to nobody but myself and Mrs. Doncastle's maid."

The speaker was Lord Mountclere's trusty valet, and the conversation was between him and the viscount in a dressing-room at Lychworth Court, on the evening after the meeting of archaeologists at Coomb Castle.

"H'm-h'm: the daughter of a butler. Does Mrs. Doncastle know of this yet, or Mr. Neigh, or any of their friends?"

"No, my lord."

"You are quite positive?"

"Quite positive. I was, by accident, the first that Mrs. Menlove named the matter to, and I told her it might be much to her advantage if she took particular care it should go no further."

"Mrs. Menlove? Who's she?"

"The lady's maid at Mrs. Doncastle's, my lord."

"Oh, ah—of course. You may leave me now, Tipman." Lord Mountclere remained in thought for a moment. "A clever little puss, to hoodwink us all like this—hee hee!" he murmured. "Her education—how finished; and her beauty—so seldom that I meet with such a woman. Cut down my elms to please a butler's daughter—what a joke—certainly a good joke! To interest me in her on the right side instead of the wrong was strange. But it can be made to change sides—hee hee—it can be made to change sides! Tipman!"

Tipman came forward from the doorway.

"Will you take care that that piece of gossip you named to me is not repeated in this house? I strongly disapprove of talebearing of any sort, and wish to hear no more of this. Such stories are never true. Answer me—do you hear? Such stories are never true."

"I beg pardon, but I think your lordship will find this one true," said the valet, quietly.

"Then where did she get her manners and education? Do you know?"

"I do not, my lord. I suppose she picked 'em up by her wits."

"Never mind what you suppose," said the old man, impatiently. "Whenever I ask a question of you tell me what you know, and no more."

"Quite so, my lord. I beg your lordship's pardon for supposing."

"H'm-h'm. Have the fashion-books and plates arrived yet?"

"*Le Follet* has, my lord; but not the others."

"Let me have it at once. Always bring it to me at once. Are there any handsome ones this time?"

"They are much the same class of female as usual I think, my lord," said Tipman, fetching the paper and laying it before him.

"Yes, they are," said the viscount, leaning back and scrutinising the faces of the women one by one, and talking softly to himself in a way that had grown upon him as his age increased. "Yet they are very well: that one with her shoulder turned is pure and charming—the brown-haired one will pass. All very harmless and innocent, but without character: no soul, or inspiration, or eloquence of eye. What an eye was hers! There is not a girl among them so beautiful as she. . . . Tipman! Come and take it away. I don't think I will subscribe to these papers any longer—how long have I subscribed? Never mind—I take no interest in these things, and I suppose it is because I am getting to be an old man. What white article is that I see on the floor yonder?"

"I can see nothing, my lord."

"Yes, yes you can. At the other end of the room. It is a white handkerchief. Bring it to me."

"I beg pardon, my lord, but I cannot see any white handkerchief. Whereabouts does your lordship mean?"

"There, in the corner. If it is not a handkerchief, what is it? Walk along till you come to it—that is it; now a little further—now your foot is against it."

"Oh that—it is not anything. It is the light reflected against the skirting, so that it looks like a white patch of something—that is all."

"H'm-h'm. My eyes—how weak they are! I am getting old, that's what it is: I am an old man."

"Oh no, my lord."

"Yes, an old man."

"Well, we shall all be old some day, and so will your lordship, I suppose; but as yet——"

"I tell you I am an old man!"

"Yes, my lord—I did not mean to contradict. An old man in one sense—old in a young man's sense, but not in a house-of-parliament or historical sense. A little oldish—I meant that, my lord."

"I may be an old man in one sense or in another sense in your mind; but let me tell you there are men older than I."

"Yes, so there are, my lord."

"People may call me what they please, and you may be impertinent enough to repeat to me what they say, but let me tell you I am not a very old man after all. I am not an old man!"

"Old in knowledge of the world I meant, my lord, not in years."

"Well, yes. Experience of course I cannot be without. And as an artist I appreciate what is beautiful. Tipman, you must go to Knollsea; don't send, but go yourself, as I wish nobody else to be concerned in this. Go to Knollsea, and find out when the steamboat for Cherbourg starts; and when you have done that, I shall want you to send Taylor to me. I wish Captain Strong to bring the 'Fawn' round into Knollsea Bay. Next week I may want you to go to Cherbourg in the yacht with me—if the Channel is quite calm—and then perhaps to Rouen and Paris. But I will speak of that to-morrow."

"Very good, my lord."

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## Æschylus.

ÆSCHYLUS, son of Euphorion, was born at Eleusis, in 525 B.C. When he was thirty-five years of age, just ten years after the production of his first tragedy, he fought at Marathon. This fact is significant in its bearings on his art and on his life. Æschylus belonged to a family distinguished during the decisive actions of the Persian war by their personal bravery. Ameinias, his brother, gained the *aristeia*, or reward for valour, at the battle of Salamis; and there was an old picture in the theatre of Dionysus at Athens which represented the great deeds of the poet and his brother Cynægeirus at Marathon. Of his military achievements he was more proud than of his poetical success; for he mentions the former and is silent about the latter in the epitaph he wrote for his own tomb. Of his actual life at Athens we only know this much, that he sided with the old aristocratic party. His retirement to Sicily after his defeat by Sophocles in 468 B.C. arose probably from the fact that Cimón, who adjudged the prize, was leader of the democratic opposition, and was felt to have allowed his political leanings to influence his decision. His second retirement to Sicily in 453 B.C. after the production of the *Oresteia*, in which he unsuccessfully supported the Areopagus against Pericles, was due perhaps in like manner to his disagreement with the rising powers in the state. That at some period of his career he was publicly accused of impiety, because he had either divulged the mysteries of Demeter, or had offended popular taste by his presentation of the Furies on the stage, rests upon sufficient antique testimony. Such charges were not uncommon at Athens, as might be proved by the biographies of Anaxagoras and Socrates. But the exact nature of the prosecution directed against Æschylus is not known; we cannot connect it with any of his extant works for certain, or determine how far it affected his action. He died at Gela, in 456 B.C., aged sixty-nine, having spent his life partly at Athens and partly at the court of Hiero, pursuing in both places his profession of tragic poet and chorus-master.

Pausanias tells a story of his early vocation to dramatic art:—"When he was a boy he was set to watch grapes in the country, and there fell asleep. In his slumber Dionysus appeared to him, and ordered him to apply himself to tragedy. At day-break he made the attempt, and succeeded very easily." There is no reason that this legend should not have been based on truth. It was the general opinion of antiquity that Æschylus was a poet possessed by the deity, working less by artistic method than by immediate inspiration. Athenæus asserts crudely that

he composed his tragedies while drunk with wine: μεθύων γούν ἔγραφε τὰς τραγωδίας; and Sophocles is reported to have told him that "He did what he ought to do, but did it without knowing." Longinus, in like manner, after praising Æschylus for the audacity of his imagination and the heroic grandeur of his conceptions, adds that his plays were frequently unpolished, unrefined, ill-digested, and rough in style. Similar expressions of opinion might be quoted from Quintilian, who describes his style as "Sublime and weighty, and grandiloquent often to a fault, but in most of his compositions rude and wanting in order." He adds, that "the Athenians allowed later poets to correct his dramas and to bring them into competition under new forms, when many of them gained prizes." Æschylus seems, therefore, to have impressed critics of antiquity with the god-intoxicated passion of his genius rather than with the perfection of his style or the consummate beauty of his art. It is possible that he received less justice from his fellow-countrymen than we, who have been educated by the Shakspearean drama, can now pay him.

Æschylus might be selected to illustrate the artistic psychology of Plato. In the *Phædrus*, Plato lays down the doctrine that poetic inspiration is akin to madness—an efflation from the Muses, a divine mania analogous to love. In the *Ion* he further develops this position, and asserts that "all good poets compose their beautiful poems, not as works of art, but because they are inspired and possessed." The analogy which he selects is drawn from the behaviour of Bacchantes under the influence of Dionysus. He wishes to distinguish between the mental operations of the poet and the philosopher, to show that the regions of poetry and science are separate, and to prove that rule and method are less sureguides than instinct when the work to be produced is a poem. "The poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him; when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless and is unable to utter his oracles." The final dictum of the *Ion* is, "inspiration, not art," θεῖον καὶ μὴ τεχνικόν. It is curious to find a Greek of the best age, himself in early days a poet, and throughout distinguished by genius allied to the poetic, thus boldly and roundly stating a theory which corresponds to the vulgar notion that poetry comes by nature, untutored and untaught, and which seems to contradict the practice and opinion of supreme authorities like Sophocles and Goethe. The truth is, that among artists we find two broadly differentiated types. The one kind produce their best work when all their faculties are simultaneously excited, and when the generative impulse takes possession of them. They seem to obey the dictates of a power superior to their ordinary faculties. The other kind are always conscious of their methods and their aims; they do nothing, as it were, by accident; they avoid improvisation, and subordinate their creative faculty to reason. The laws of art may be just as fully appreciated by the more instinctive artists, and may have equally determined their choice of form and their calculation of effects; but at the



moment of production these rules are thrust into the background; whereas they are continually present to the minds of the deliberate workers. It may be said in passing, that this distinction enables us to understand some phrases which the Italians, acutely sensitive to artistic conditions, have reserved for the passionate and highly inspired workers; they speak, for instance, of painting a picture or blocking out a statue *con furia*, when the artist is a Tintoretto or a Michael Angelo. If there is any truth at all in this analysis, we are justified in believing that Æschylus belonged to the former, and Sophocles to the latter class of poets, and that this is the secret of the criticism passed by Sophocles upon his predecessor. The account which Æschylus himself gave of his tragedies throws no light upon his method: he is reported to have said that they were "fragments picked up from the mighty feasts of Homer." The value he attached to them is proved by his saying that he dedicated what he wrote to Time.

Though the ancients may have been right in regarding Æschylus as an enthusiastic writer, obeying the impulse of the god within him rather than the rules of reason, no dramatic poet ever had a higher sense of the æsthetic unity which tragedy demands. Each of his masterpieces presents to the imagination a coherent and completely organised whole; every part is penetrated with the dominant thought and passion that inspired it. He had, moreover, the strongest sense of the formal requirements of his art. Tragedy had scarcely passed beyond the dithyrambic stage when he received it from the hands of Phrynichus. Æschylus gave it the form which, with comparatively unimportant alterations, it maintained throughout the brilliant period of Attic culture. It was he who curtailed the function of the Chorus and developed dialogue, thus expanding the old Thespian elements of tragedy in accordance with the true spirit of the drama. By adding a second actor, by attending diligently to the choric songs and dances, by inventing the cothurnus and the tragic mask, and by devising machinery and scenes adapted to the large scale of the Athenian stage, he gave its permanent form to the dramatic art of the Greeks. However god-possessed he may have been during the act of composition, he was therefore a wise critic and a potent founder in all matters pertaining to the theatre. Yet though Æschylus in this way made the drama, the style in which he worked went out of date in his own lifetime. So rapid was the evolution of intelligence at Athens that during a single generation his tragedies became, we will not say old-fashioned, but archaic. They were duly put upon the stage; a chorus at the public expense was provided for their representation, and the MS. which authorised their canon and their text was regarded as a public treasure. Yet the Athenians already had come to respect them in the same way as the English race respect the Oratorios of Handel. They praised them for their unapproachable magnificence; they knew that no man of the latter days could match them in their own kind; but they criticized their antique form and obsolete embellishments. The poet who

in his youth had played the part of innovator, and who had shocked the public by his realistic presentation of the Furies, depended in the heyday of the fame of Aristophanes upon conservative support and favour.

Æschylus was essentially the demiurge of ancient art. The purely creative faculty has never been exhibited upon a greater scale, or applied to material more utterly beyond the range of feebler poets. He possessed in the highest degree the power of giving life and form to the vast, the incorporeal, and the ideal. In his dramas mountains were made to speak; Oceanus received shape, conversing face to face with the Titan Prometheus, while his daughters, nurslings of the waves and winds, were gathered on the Scythian crags in groups to listen to their argument. The old intangible, half-mystical, half-superstitious fears of the Greek conscience became substantial realities in his mind. Justice and Insolence and Atë no longer floated, dream-like, in the background of religious thought: he gave them a pedigree, connected them in a terrible series, and established them as ministers of supreme Zeus. The Eumenides, whom the Greeks before him had not dared to figure to their fancy, assumed a form more hideous than that of Gorgons or Harpies. Their symbolic torches, their snake-entwined tresses, their dreadful eyes, and nostrils snorting fiery breath, were shown for the first time visibly in the trilogy of *Orestes*. It was a revelation which Greek art accepted as decisive. Thus the imagination of Æschylus added new deities to the Athenian Pantheon. The same creative faculty enabled him to inform elemental substances, fire, water, air, with personal vitality. The heaven, in his verse, yearns to wound the earth with love-embraces; the falling rain impregnates the rich soil. The throes of Ætna are a Titan's groaning. The fire that leaps from Ida to the Hermæan crags of Lemnos, from Ægiplanctus to the Arachnean height, has life within it. There is nothing dead, devoid of soul, in the world of this arch-mythopoeist. Even the ghosts and phantoms, dreams and omens, on which he loves to dwell, are substantial. Their reality exists outside the soul they dominate.

As befits a demiurgic nature, Æschylus conceived and executed upon a stupendous scale. His outlines are huge; his figures are colossal; his style is broad and sweeping—like a river in its fullness and its might. Each of his plays might be compared to a gigantic statue, whereof the several parts, taken separately, are beautiful, while the whole is put together with majestic harmony. But as the sculptor, in modelling a colossus, cannot afford to introduce the details which would grace a chimney ornament, so Æschylus was forced to sacrifice the working-out of minor motives. His imagination, penetrated through and through with the spirit of his subject as a whole, was more employed in presenting a series of great situations, wrought together and combined into a single action, than in elaborating the minutiae of characters and plots. The result has been that those students who delight in detail have complained of a certain disproportion between his huge design and his insufficient execution. It has too frequently been implied that he could

rough-hew like a Cyclops, but that he could not finish like a Praxiteles; that he was more capable of sketching in an outline than of filling up its parts. Fortunately we possess the means of laying bare the misconception upon which these complaints are founded. There still remains one, but only one, of his colossal works entire. The *Oresteia* is sufficient to prove that we gain no insight into his method as an artist if we consider only single plays. He thought and wrote in Trilogies. Sophocles, with whom it is usual to compare Æschylus, somewhat to the disadvantage of the latter, abandoned the large scale, the uncial letters, of the trilogy. Each separate Sophoclean drama is a studied whole. In order to do Æschylus the very barest justice, we ought therefore to contrast, not the *Agamemnon* alone, but the entire *Oresteia* with the *Ædipus* or the *Antigone*. It will then be seen that the one poet, designing colossi, gave to them the style and finish and the unity which suit a statue larger than life-size: the other, restricting himself within more narrow limits, was free to lavish labour on the slightest details of his model. Such elaboration, on the scale adopted by Æschylus, would have produced a bewildering and painful effect of complexity. The vast design which it was the artist's object to throw into the utmost possible relief, would inevitably have suffered from excess of finish.

Few dramatists have ventured, like Æschylus, to wield the chisel of a Titan, or to knead whole mountains into statues corresponding to the superhuman grandeur of their thought. Few indeed can have felt that this was their true province, that to this they had the thews and sinews adequate. He stands alone in his triumphant use of the large manner, and this solitude is prejudicial to his fame with students whose taste has been formed in the school of Sophocles. Surveying the long roll of illustrious tragedians, there is but one, until we come to Victor Hugo, in whom the Æschylean spirit found fresh incarnation: and he had fallen upon days disadvantageous to his full development; his life was cut short in its earliest bloom, and the conditions under which he had to work, obscure and outcast from society, were adverse to the highest production. This poet is our own Christopher Marlowe. Like Æschylus, Marlowe's imagination was at home in the illimitable; like Æschylus, he apprehended immaterial and elemental forces—lusts, ambitions, and audacities of soul—as though they were substantial entities, and gave them shape and form; like Æschylus, he was the master of a "mighty line," the maker of a new celestial music for his race, the founder and creator of an art which ruled his century, the mystagogue of pomps and pageants and things terrible and things superb in shrines unvisited by earlier poets of his age and clime; like Æschylus, he stands arraigned of emptiness, extravagance, and "sound and fury," because the scale on which he wrought was vast, because he set no verbal limit to the presentation of the passion or the thought in view. Comparing Æschylus to Marlowe is comparing the monarch of the pine forest to the sapling fir, the full-grown lion to the lion's whelp, the achievement of the hero to

the promise of the stripling. Yet Herakles in his cradle, when he strangled Hera's serpents, already revealed the firm hand and unflinching nerve of him who plucked the golden fruit of the Hesperides. Even so Marlowe's work betrays the style and spirit of a youthful Titan; it is the labour of a beardless Æschylus, the first-fruit of Apollo's laurel-bough untimely burned, the libation of a consecrated priest who, while a boy, already stood "chin-deep in the Pierian flood." If we contrast the *Supplices*, which Æschylus can hardly have written before the age at which Marlowe died, with *Tamburlaine*, which was certainly produced before Marlowe was twenty-six, the most immature work of the Greek with the most immature work of the English dramatist, we obtain a standard for estimating the height to which the author of *Faustus* might have grown if he had lived to write his *Oresteia* in the fullness of a vigorous maturity.

Much that has been described as Asiatic in the genius of Æschylus may be referred to what I have called his demiurgic force. No mere citation of Oriental similes will account for the impression of hugeness left upon our memory, for the images enormous as those of farthest Ind, yet shaped with true Hellenic symmetry, for the visions vast as those of Ezekiel, yet conveyed withal in rich and radiant Greek. The so-called Asiatic element in Æschylus was something which he held in common with the poets and the prophets of the East—a sense of life more mystic and more deep, a power to seize it and discover it more real and plastic, than is often given to the nations of the West. This determination toward the hitherto invisible, unshaped, and unbelieved, to which he must give form, and for which he would fain win credence, may possibly help to explain the absence of human love as a main motive in his tragedies. There is plenty of Ares—too much, indeed, unless we recollect that the poet was a man of Marathon—but of Aphrodite nothing in his inspiration. It would seem that this passion, which formed the theme of Euripides' best work, and which Sophocles in the *Antigone* used to enhance the tragic situation brought about through the self-will of the heroine, had no attraction for Æschylus. Among the fragments of his plays there is indeed one passage in which he speaks of Love as a cosmical force, controlling the elemental powers of heaven and earth, and producing the flocks and fruits which sustain mortal life. The lines in question are put into the mouth of Aphrodite. The lost *Myrmidones*, again, described the love of Achilles for Patroclus, which Æschylus seems to have portrayed with a strength of passion that riveted the attention of antiquity. The plot of the *Supplices*, in like manner, implies the lawless desire of the sons of Ægyptus for the daughters of Danaus; and the adultery of Clytemnestra with Ægisthus lies in the background of the *Agamemnon*. But of love, in the more romantic modern sense of the word, we find no trace either in the complete plays or in the fragments of Æschylus. It lay, perhaps, too close at hand for him to care to choose it as the theme of tragic poetry; and had he so selected it, he

could hardly have avoided dwelling on its aberrations. The general feeling of the Greeks about love, as well as his own temper, would have made this necessary. It did not occur to the Greeks to separate love in its healthy and simple manifestations by any sharp line of demarcation from the other emotions of humanity. The brotherly, filial, and wifely feelings, those which owe their ascendancy to use and to the sanctities of domestic life, appeared in their eyes more important than the affection of youth for maid unwedded. When love ceased to be the expression on the one side of a physical need, and on the other the binding tie which kept the family together, the Greeks regarded it as a disease, a madness. Plato, who treated it with seriousness, classed it among the *μάταια*: and Euripides portrayed it as a god-sent curse on Phædra. Viewed in this light, it may be urged that the love of Zeus for Io, in the *Prometheus*, set forth a passion which became an unbearable burden and source of misery to its victim; but of what we understand by love, there is here in reality no question. The tale of Io rather resembles the survival of some mystic Oriental myth of incarnation.

The organic vitality which Æschylus, by the exercise of his creative power, communicated to the structure of his tragedies, is further noticeable in his power of conducting a drama without prologue and without narration. In Æschylus, the information which is necessary in order to place the spectators at the proper point of view, is conveyed as part of the action. He does not, like Euripides, compose a formal and preliminary speech; or, like Shakspeare, introduce two or three superfluous characters in conversation. In this respect the openings of the *Prometheus*, the *Agamemnon*, and the *Eumenides* are masterpieces of the most consummate art. Not only are we plunged *in medias res*, without the slightest sacrifice of clearness; but the spectacle presented to our imagination is stirring in the highest degree. The fire has leapt from mountain peak to peak until at last it blazes on the watchman's eyes; Hephæstus and his satellites are actually engaged in nailing down the Titan to his bed of pain; the Furies are slumbering within the sacred Delphian shrine, and the ghost of Clytemnestra moves among them, rousing each in turn from her deep trance. Euripides, proceeding less by immediate vision than by patient thought, prefixed a monologue, which contained a programme of precoling events, and prepared the spectator for what would follow in the play. These narratives are often frigid, and not unfrequently are placed, without propriety, in the mouth of one of the actors. We feel that a wholly detached prologue would have been more artistic.

The same is true about the speeches of the Messenger. The art of Æschylus was far too highly organized to be obliged to have recourse to such rude methods. It is true that, when he pleased, as in the *Persæ*, he gave the principal part to the Messenger. The actors in that play are little better than spectators; and the same may be said about the *Seven against Thebes*. But the Messenger, though employed as here



for special purposes, was no integral part of his dramatic machinery; nor did he ever commit the decisive event of the drama to narration. His masterstroke as a dramatic poet—the cry of Agamemnon, following close upon the prophecies of Cassandra, and breaking the silence like a clap of doom, in that awful moment when the scene is left empty and the Chorus tremble with the apprehension of a coming woe—would probably have yielded in the hands of Euripides to the speech of a servant. It was not that the later poet would not willingly have employed every means in his power for stirring the emotions of his audience; but he had not the creative imagination of his predecessor; he could not grasp his subject as a whole so perfectly as to dispense with artificial and mechanical devices. He fell back therefore upon narrative, in which he was a supreme master.

Equally remarkable from this point of view is the Æschylean treatment of the Chorus. It is never really separated from the action of the play. In the *Prometheus*, for example, the Oceanidæ actually share the doom of the protagonist. In the *Suppliants* the daughters of Danaus may be termed the protagonist: for upon them converges the whole interest of the drama. In the *Seven against Thebes* the participation of the Chorus in the fate of the chief actors is proved by half of them siding with Ismene and the other half with Antigone at the conclusion. In the *Persæ* they represent the nation which has suffered through the folly of Xerxes. In the *Agamemnon* the elders of Mycenæ assume an attitude directly hostile to Ægisthus and Clytemnestra. In the *Choephoræ* the women who sympathise with Electra further the scheme of Orestes by putting Ægisthus off the track of danger and sending him unarmed to meet his murderers. In the *Eumenides* the Furies play a part at least equal in importance to that of Orestes. They, like the protagonist, stand before the judgment-seat of Pallas and accept the verdict of the Areiopagus. Thus, in each of the extant plays of Æschylus, even the Chorus, which was subsequently so far separated from the action as to become a mere commentator and spectator, is vitally important in the conduct of the drama. Euripides by formalizing the several elements of the tragic art, by detaching the Chorus, introducing a prologue, and expanding the functions of the Messenger, sacrificed that higher kind of unity which we admire in the harmonious working of complex parts. What he gained was the opportunity of concentrating attention upon the conflict of motives, occasions for the psychological analysis of character, and scope for ethical reflection and rhetorical description.

I have hitherto been occupied by what appear to me the essential features of the genius of Æschylus—its demiurgic faculty of creativeness, and its capacity of dealing with heroic rather than merely human forms. To pass to the consideration of his theology would at this point be natural and easy. I do not, however, wish to dwell on what is called the prophetic aspect of his tragedy at present. It is enough to say that, here, as in the sphere of pure art, he was in the truest sense creative.



Without exactly removing the old landmarks, he elevated the current conception of Zeus regarded as the supreme deity, and introduced a novel life and depth of meaning into the moral fabric of the Greek religion. Much as he rejoiced in the delineation of Titanic and primeval powers, he paid but slight attention to the minor gods of the Pantheon; his creed was monotheism detached upon a pantheistic background, to which the forms of polytheism gave variety and colour. Zeus was all in all for Æschylus far more than for his predecessors, Homer and Hesiod. The most remarkable point about the Æschylean theology is, that in spite of its originality it seems to have but little affected the substance of serious Greek thought. Plato, for example, talks of Prometheus in the *Protagoras* as if no new conception of his character had been revealed to him by Æschylus. We are not therefore justified in regarding the dramatic poet as in any strict sense a prophet, and the oracles which he uttered are chiefly valuable as indications of his own peculiar ways of thinking; nor ought we, even so, perhaps, to demand from Æschylus too much consistency. The *Supplikes*, for instance, cannot without due reservation be used to illustrate the *Prometheus*; since the dramatic situation in the two tragedies is so different as to account for any apparent divergence of opinion. There is, however, one point in the morality of Æschylus concerning fate and freewill which calls for special comment, since we run a danger here of doing real violence to his art by overstating some one theory about his supposed philosophical intention. I allude of course to his conception of Destiny. If we adopt the fatalistic explanation of Greek tragedy propounded by Schlegel, we can hardly avoid coarsening and demoralising fables which owe their interest not to the asphyxiating force of destiny, but to the action and passion of human beings. If, on the other hand, we overstrain the theological doctrine of Nemesis, we run a risk of trying to find sermons in works of art, and of exaggerating the importance of details which support our favourite hypothesis. It should never be forgotten that whatever view we take of the moral and religious purpose of Greek tragedy, has been gained by subsequent analysis. It was not in any case present to the consciousness of the poet as a necessary condition of his art as art. His first business was to provide for the dramatic presentation of his subject: his philosophy, whether ethical or theological, transpired in the heat and stress of production, not because he sought to give it deliberate expression, but because it formed an integral part of the fabric of his mind. Æschylus firmly believed in the indissoluble connection between acts and consequences. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," "the fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge," formed the groundwork of his view of human life. This sort of fatalism he coloured with religious theories adopted from the antique theology of his race, but strongly moralized, and developed in the light of his own reason. Much of elder superstition, therefore, clings about his ethics, and an awful

sense of guilt and doom attaches to acts in themselves apparently indifferent; nor can we fail to recognise a belief in fate as fate, τὸ περπωμένον, superior to all besides. The realm of tragic terror lies precisely in this border-land between inexorable reason and unreasoned fear. It has nothing to do with pure science or pure religion: they speak each for themselves, with their own voice; but it is not the voice of the dramatist. On the one hand, logical fatalism offers no freedom for the play of character, no turning-points of choice, no revolutions which may rouse our sympathy and stir us with the sense of self-determined ruin. On the other hand, theology in its methodic form supplies indeed the text of sermons, admonitions, and commandments, but not the subject-matter for a work of art. Where the necessity of circumstance or the will of the deity is paramount, human action sinks into insignificance; the canons of inevitable sequence and of obedience under pain of penalty supersedes the casuistry of the poet's motives, and the poet is swallowed up in the divine or the logician. Somewhere between the two, in the intermediate darkness, or μεταίχμιος ἀκότος, where all the ways of life are perilous, and where no clear light reveals the pitfalls of fate and the gins of religious duty, lies the track of the tragedian. His men and women are free; yet their action is overruled by destiny. They err against the law of heaven and flourish for a season; but the law pursues them and exacts its penalty. While terror and pity are stirred by the pervading sense of human helplessness, scope is still left for the exercise of the moral judgment, nor is the poet precluded from teaching his audience by precept and example. These remarks apply to the domestic curse which played so prominent a part in all Greek tragedy, and especially in the dramas of Æschylus. It was no mere avalanche of doom falling from above and crushing the innocent and the criminal alike; nor, again, can it justly be paralleled by what it most resembles, the taint of hereditary disease. It partook of the blind force of fate; it was propagated from generation to generation by laws analogous to those which govern madness; yet it contained another element, inasmuch as the transgression of each successive victim was a necessary condition of its prolongation. Sin alone, however, was not sufficient to establish its mysterious power; for all men are liable to offend against the divine law, and yet all families are not afflicted with a curse. In order to appreciate its nature, all these factors must be taken into account; their sum total, notwithstanding the exactitude of our calculation, remains within the realm of mystery. The undiscovered residuum, or rather the resolution of all these elements in a power which is all of them and more than all, is fate. Students who are curious to appreciate the value attached by the Greeks themselves to the several elements implicit in the notion of domestic Até, should attentively peruse the longer of the two arguments to the *Seven against Thebes*, while the play itself sets forth more energetically than any other the terrible lesson of the Æschylean Nemesis. The protagonist, Eteocles,

is a curse-intoxicated man, driven by the doom of his race and by the imprecations of his father on a dreadful shoal of fate. He walks open-eyed to meet his destiny—to slay his brother and be slain. Still, helpless as he seems, he is not innocent. His own rebellious and selfish nature, by rousing the fury of Œdipus, kindles afresh the smouldering flame of the ancestral Até. Thus the fate which overwhelms him is compounded of hereditary guilt, personal transgression, and the courage-quelling terror of a father's curse. But it is more than all this: it is an irresistible compelling force. He cannot avoid it, since action has been thrust upon him by the strength of circumstance. The tragic horror of his situation arises from the necessity under which he labours of going forward, though he knows that the next step leads to a bottomless abyss.

In estimating the characters of Æschylus what has already been said about his art in general must be taken into account. He was occupied with the task of exhibiting a great action, a *ἔργον* in the strictest sense of the Greek phrase; and this action was frequently so colossal in its relations as to preclude the niceties of merely personal character. Persons had to become types in order to play their part efficiently. The underlying moral and religious idea was blent with the æsthetic purpose of the poet, and penetrated with the interest pertaining to the clash of conflicting principles: the total effect produced sometimes defies analysis of character in detail. The psychology of his chief characters is therefore inherent in their action, and is only calculable in connection with their momentary environments. We have to infer their specific quality less from what they say than from their bearing and their conduct in the crises of the drama. Only after profound study of the situation of each tragedy, after steeping our imagination in the elementary conditions selected by the poet, can we realise their individuality. In this respect Æschylus resembles Homer. Like Homer, he repeats the work of nature, and creates men and women entire. He does not strive to lay bare the conscious workings of the mind piecemeal. He has none of the long speeches on which Euripides relied for setting forth the flux and reflux of contending motives, or for making clear the attitude adopted by his *dramatis personee*. There is no revelation of the anatomical method in his art; nor again can we detect the *ars celandi artem* to which poets of a more reflective age are forced to have recourse. Everything with Æschylus is organic; each part is subordinated to the whole which pre-existed in his mind, and which had been evolved in its essential unity from his imagination. Even the weighty sentences and gnomic judgments upon human affairs which his actors utter, are necessitated by the straits in which they find themselves. Severed from their context, they lose half their value; whereas the similar reflections in Euripides may be detached without injury, and read like extracts from a commonplace-book. Perhaps sufficient stress has not been laid by critics upon this quality of absolute creativeness which distinguishes the Homeric, Æschylean, and

Shakespearean poets from those who proceed from mental analysis to artistic presentation. It is easy to render an account of the characters which have first been thought out as ethical specimens and then provided with a suitable exterior. It is very difficult to dissect those which started into being by an act of intuitive invention, and which, dissociated from the texture of circumstance in which they play their part, appear at first sight to elude our intellectual grasp. Yet the latter are found in the long run to be cast in the more vital mould. Once apprehended, they haunt the memory like real persons, and we may fancy, if we choose, innumerable series of events through which they would maintain their individuality intact. They are, in fact, living creatures, and not puppets of the poet's brain.

Of the characters of Æschylus, those which have been wrought with the greatest care, and which leave the most profound impression on the memory, are Clytemnestra and Prometheus. Considering how slight were the outlines of the Homeric picture of Clytemnestra, it may be said that Æschylus created her. What is still more remarkable than his creation of Clytemnestra, is that he should have realised her far more vividly than any of the men whom he has drawn. This proves that Æschylus at least among the Attic Greeks gave a full share to women in the affairs of the great world of public action. As a woman, she stands outside the decencies and duties of womanhood, supporting herself by the sole strength of her powerful nature and indomitable will. The self-sufficingness of Clytemnestra is the main point in her portrait. Her force of character is revealed by the sustained repression of her real feelings and the concealment of her murderous purpose, which enable her to compass Agamemnon's death. During the critical moments when she receives her husband in state, and leads him to the bath within the palace, she remains calm and collected. The deed that she has plotted must, if ever, be done at once. A single word from the Chorus, who are aware of her relations to Ægisthus, would spoil all her preparations. Yet she shows no fear, and can command the fairest flowers of rhetoric to greet the king with feigned congratulations. The same strength is displayed in her treatment of Cassandra, on whom she wastes no words, expends no irritable energy, although she hates and has the mind to murder her. Studied craft and cold disdain mark her bearing at the supreme crisis. When the death-blow has been given to Agamemnon, she breathes freely; her language reveals the exhilaration of one who expands his lungs and opens wide his nostrils to snuff the elastic air of liberty. The blood upon her raiment is as pleasant to her as a shower of rain on thirsty corn-fields; she shouts like soldiers when the foemen turn to fly. Æschylus has sustained the impression of her force of character by the radiant speech with which he gifts her. This splendour of rhetoric belongs by nature to the magnificent and lawless woman, who rejoices in her shame. It is like the superb colours of a venomous lily. The contrast between the serpent-coils of her sophistic speech to Agamemnon

at the palace-gate, and the short sentences in which she describes his murder—true tiger-leaps of utterance—is a triumph of dramatic art. As regards her motive for killing the king, I see no reason to suppose that Æschylus intended to diverge from the Homeric tradition. Clytemnestra has lived in adultery with Ægisthus; she dares not face a public discovery of her fault, nor is she willing to forego her paramour. The passage in the *Choephore*, where she argues with Orestes before her own murder, proves that she had no other valid reason to set forth. Her son tells her she shall be slain and laid by the side of Ægisthus, seeing that in life she preferred him to her lord. All her answer is: "Child, in your father's absence I was sorely tried." The same is clear from the allusions in the *Agamemnon* to the nerveless lion, who tumbles in the royal couch, and is a sorry housekeeper for the departed king. Æschylus, however, with the instinct of a great poet, has not suffered our minds to dwell wholly upon this adulterous motive. He makes Clytemnestra put forth other pleas, and intends us to believe in their validity, as lending her self-confidence in the commission of her crime, and as suggesting reasons for our sympathy. Revenge for Iphigeneia's sacrifice, the superstitious sense of the Erinnyes of the house of Atreus, jealousy of Chryseis and Cassandra, mingle with the master impulse in her mind, and furnish her with specious arguments. The solidity of Clytemnestra's character is impressed upon us with a force and a reality of presentation that have never been surpassed. She maintains the same *aplomb*, the same cold glittering energy of speech, the same presence of mind and unswerving firmness of nerve, whether she bandies words of bitter irony with the Chorus, or ceremoniously receives the king, or curls the lip of scorn at Cassandra, or defies the Argives after Agamemnon's death. She loves power, and despises show. When the deed is done, and fair words are no longer needed, her hypocrisy is cast aside. At the same time she defends herself with a moral impudence which is only equalled by her intellectual skill, and rises at last to the sublimity of arrogance when she asserts her right to be regarded as the incarnate demon of the house. Clytemnestra has been frequently compared to Lady Macbeth; nor is it easy to think of the one without being reminded of the other. Clytemnestra, however, is a less elastic character than Lady Macbeth: she is cast in metal of a tougher temper, and the springs which move her are more simple. Lady Macbeth has not in reality so much force and fibre: she does not design Duncan's death beforehand; she acts from overmastering impulse under the temptation of opportunity, and, when her husband and herself are sunk chin-deep in blood, she cannot bear the load of guilt upon her conscience. Shakspeare has conceived and analysed a woman far more sensitive, and therefore more liable to nervous failure, than Clytemnestra. Clytemnestra never breaks down. Her sin feeds and nourishes her nature, instead of starving and palsying it; her soul grows fat and prospers, nor does she know what conscience means. She is never more imposing in her pride of intellectual strength than when



she receives the feigned news of Orestes' death. Just as the superior nature of Lady Macbeth is enhanced by contrast with her weaker husband, so Clytemnestra appears to the greatest advantage by the side of Ægisthus. Ægisthus in the last scene of the *Agamemnon* brags and blusters: Clytemnestra utters no superfluous syllable. Ægisthus insults the corpse of the king; Clytemnestra is satisfied with having slain him. Nothing shakes her courage or weakens her determination. When Orestes turns his sword against her in the *Choephoreæ*, her first impulse is to call aloud: "Reach me with all speed an axe of weight to tire a man, that we may know at once the issue of this combat." She will measure weapons with her son. And when his blade is already at her breasts, she has the nerve to bare them and exclaim: "My son, behold where thou didst lie; these nipples gave thee milk." There is no groaning in her last life-struggle. She dies, as she lived, self-sustained and equal to all emergencies. This terrible personality endures even in the grave. When she rises in the *Eumenides*, a ghost, from Hades, it is with bitter taunts and a most biting tongue that she stirs up the Furies to revenge. If we are to seek a parallel for Clytemnestra in our own dramatic literature, I should be inclined to look for it in the *Vittoria Corombona* of Webster. The modern poet has not developed his "white devil of Italy" with the care that Æschylus has bestowed on Clytemnestra. Her portrait remains a sketch rather than a finished picture; and the circumstances of her tragedy are infinitely less impressive than those which place the Queen of Mycenæ on so eminent a pinnacle of crime. But Vittoria is cast in the same mould. Like Clytemnestra, she has the fascination and the force of sin, self-satisfied and self-contained to face the world with brazen arrogance, and browbeat truth before the judgment-seat of gods or men.

J. A. S.



## Comparative Folk-Lore.

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FOLK-LORE has been well called the *débris* of ancient mythology, but the expression, though probably true of so much of traditional lore as still survives in legends and fairy tales, seems of doubtful application to those popular superstitions yet so prevalent among us, of which our kitchens, our cottages, and our nurseries are the chief depositories. We allude to those beliefs, fancies, and customs, which, however trivial in themselves, gain an interest from the area they cover and the races they connect. However locally absurd, they acquire significance from their geographical extent. For they suggest past unions between nations now remote, in the same way as the smallest weeds are capable of telling, by their geographical dispersion, of lands that once stretched where seas now roll. To take some instances. The English tradition that a swallow's nest is lucky, and its life protected by imaginary penalties, is one that in isolation we should naturally and rightly disregard. But when we find that the belief belongs to the Germanic race, and that the supposed penalties are the same in Yorkshire as they are in Swabia, our wonder is aroused; and when we further learn that in China, too, the swallow's nest is lucky and its life inviolate, we become aware of a possible history and antiquity attaching to the superstition, which offer an inviting field for speculation and study. So the belief, that the first appearance of mice in a house betokens death, becomes of interest when it is found in Russia as well as in Devonshire. Mothers there are both in Germany and in England who fear their children may grow up to be thieves if their nails are cut before their first year is over. Such superstitions, as we call them, had, without doubt, once a reason; in some cases still to be traced, in others effaced by the wear and tear of time. By the application to them of the comparative method not only may we hope to explain and connect ideas otherwise inexplicable, but also to come to conclusions not uninteresting from an archeological point of view. For we believe it can be shown that they are the *débris* of ancient barbarism rather than of ancient mythology, and that as such they corroborate the evidence already given by the more material remains and witnesses of early times.

For the existence of similar traditions in widely remote districts there are three possible hypotheses. These are, migration, community of origin, or similarity of development. Either they have spread from one place to another, or they are the legacies of times when the people possessing them were actually united, or they have sprung up independently in different localities, in virtue of the natural laws of mental growth. It may be

difficult of any given belief to say to which of these three classes it belongs: but there are many beliefs, so alike in general features, yet so divergent in detail, as best to accord with the theory of a common descent or a common development. Some, for instance, common apparently to most nations of the Aryan stock, may consequently date back to periods long anterior to the separation; whilst others, yet more widely spread than these, suggest relationships between races of men more fundamental and remote than can be detected in language, and point to an affinity that is older and stronger than mere affinity of blood, an affinity, that is, in the conceptions and fancies of primitive thought. For where actual relationship is not proved by language, analogies in tradition are better accounted for by supposing similar grooves of mental development than by any other theory. Philology may prove a relationship between, let us say, the Nixens of Germany and the Nisses of Scandinavia: but there is no relationship beyond similarity of conception between the Nereids of antiquity and the mermaids of the North, or between the Brownies of Scotland and the Lares of Latium. Children, of whatever race or country they may be, dislike the dark, nor do we think it necessary to account for this common trait by any theory of connection or descent. So with nations. They are or were, in the face of nature, as children in the dark, and the nearly similar phenomena of sun and storm, breeze and calm, may have sufficed to create in them, in their several homes, many of those fears and fancies we find common to all.

It is in so far as Comparative Folk-Lore can prove to us the existence of similar laws of thought, apparent alike in the superstitions which have descended to us from the remote past and in those of modern savage races, that it becomes of special interest. For the fact that there still survive among civilised people ideas and practices, corresponding in structure to those found in the various stages of the lower races, is of the same force to prove that we once went through those several stages, as the survival of traits in the growth of the individual, similar to those actually found in lower animals, point to our gradual ascent from a lower scale of being. The belief in, and dread of, evil spirits, the endeavour to affect them by acting on their fetishes or substitutes, the worship of natural objects, as trees, animals, water or even stones, the mistaking of mere sequence in time for causal connection and the consequent importance attached to such occurrences as have been observed to precede remarkable phenomena, these and many other characteristics of modern savages find abundant representation in modern civilisation, and it is more likely they are there as survivals than as importations. And thereby is corroborated the idea, already so widely propagated by other sciences, that the history of humanity has been a rise and not a fall, not a degradation from completeness to imperfection, but a constantly accelerating progress from savagery to culture; that in short the iron age of the world belongs to the past, its golden one to the future.

No one indeed, who has not turned special attention to the subject,

can form any conception of the mass of purely pagan ideas, which, vanished over by Christianity, but barely hidden by it, grow in rank profusion in our very midst and exercise a living hold, which it is impossible either to realise or to fathom, on the popular mind. Like old Roman or British remains, buried under subsequent accumulations of earth and stones, or superficially concealed by an overgrowth of herbage, uninjured during all the length of time they have lain unobserved, there they lie just beneath the surface of nineteenth-century life, as indelible records of our mental history and origin. It is only in the higher social strata that they can be deemed extinct. Though it can no longer be said, as it was in the seventeenth century, that most houses of the West-end of London have the horse-shoe on the threshold,\* yet it may still be said of many a farm or cottage in the country. The astronomer Tycho Brahe, if he met an old woman or hare on leaving home, would take the hint to turn back: but it seems to be only the working population of England, Scotland, or Germany who still do the same. Statistics show that the receipts of omnibus and railway companies in France are less on Friday than on any other day; and many a German that lay dead on the carnage fields of the late war was found to have carried his word-charm against sword and bullet. Most English villages still have their wise men or women, whose powers range from ruling the planets to curing rheumatics or detecting thieves; and so lately as 1863, an old man of eighty was "swum" for a wizard in the mill stream at Little Hedingham in Essex, and died in consequence of this cruel superstition.†

We who have been brought up to look upon the classification of things into animal, vegetable, and mineral, as primary, or indeed intuitive, are apt to forget that savages never classify, and that animate and inanimate to them are both alike. Sir John Lubbock has collected conclusive evidence that so inconceivable a confusion of thought exists. The Tahitians, who sowed some iron nails that young ones might grow from them; the Esquimaux, who thought a musical-box the child of a small hand-organ; the Bushmen, who mistook a large waggon for the mother of some smaller ones, show the tendency of savages to identify motion with life, and to attribute feelings and relations such as actuate or connect themselves to everything that moves of itself or is capable of being moved. A native sent by one missionary to another with some

\* Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, 197.

† Those who doubt the existence of much popular superstition in this century may judge of the amount and value of the evidence by referring to the following books: 1. All the volumes of *Notes and Queries*, Index, Folk-Lore. 2. Harland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk-Lore*, 1867. 3. Henderson's *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders*, 1866. 4. Kelly's *Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-Lore*, 1863. 5. Stewart's *Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 1851. 6. Sternberg's *Dialect and Folk-Lore of Northamptonshire*, 1851. 7. Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, 1851. 8. Birlinger, *Volksthümliches aus Schwaben*, 1861. 9. Koehler, *Volksbrauch im Voigtlände*, 1867. 10. Bosquet, *La Normandie Romanesque*, 1846.

loaves, and a letter stating the number, having eaten two of them and been detected through the letter, took the precaution the next time to put the letter under a stone that it might not *see* the theft committed. Now there are numerous superstitions connected with bees, which there is reason to think are relics of this savage state of thought, when all that existed existed under the same conditions as man himself, capable of the same feelings, and subject to the same wants and sorrows. For bees are credited with a perfect comprehension of all that men do and utter, and, as members themselves of the family they belong to, they must be treated in every way as human in their emotions. French children are taught that the inmates of the hive will come out to sting them for any bad language uttered within their hearing, and many of our readers have probably at some time of their lives, on seeing a crape-covered hive, learnt on inquiry that the bees were in mourning for some member of their owner's family. In Suffolk, when a death occurs in a house, they immediately inform the bees, ask them formally to the funeral, and fix crape on their hives; otherwise it is believed they would die or desert. And the same custom, for the same reason, prevails, with local modifications, not only in nearly every English county, but very widely over the continent. In Normandy and Brittany may be seen, as in England, the crape-set hives; in Yorkshire some of the funeral bread, in Lincolnshire some cake and sugar, may be seen at the hive door; and we have read of a Devonshire nurse on her way to a funeral sending back a child to perform the duty she herself had forgotten, of telling the bees. The usual explanation of these customs and ideas is that they originated long ago with the death or flight of some bees, consequent on the neglect they incurred when the hand that once tended them could do so no longer. Yet a wider survey of analogous facts leads to the explanation above suggested; for, not to dwell on the fact that in some places in England they are informed of weddings as well as of funerals, and their hives are decorated with favours as well as with crape, the practice of giving information of deaths extends in some parts not only to other animals as well, but, in addition, to inanimate things. In Lithuania, deaths are announced, not only to the bees, but to horses and cattle, by the rattling of a bunch of keys, and the same custom is reported from Dartford in Kent. In the North Riding, not long since, a farmer gravely attributed the loss of a cow to his not having told it of his wife's death. In Cornwall, the indoor plants are often put into mourning as well as the hives, and at Rauen, in North Germany, not only are the bees informed of their master's death, but the trees also, by means of shaking them. Near Speier, not only must the bees be moved, but the wine and vinegar must be shaken, if it is wished that they shall not turn bad. Near Wurtemberg, the vinegar must be shaken, the bird-cage hung differently, the cattle tied up differently, and the beehive transposed. Near Aushach the flower-pots must also be moved, and the wine-casks knocked three times; while at Gernsheim, not only must the wine in the cellar be shaken

to prevent it turning sour, but the corn in the loft must be moved if the sown corn is to sprout.\* But all these customs are too much alike to be unrelated, and too widely spread to have sprung up without some reason, by some mere caprice or coincidence, and it is difficult to suggest any other reason for them than that they go back to a time when not only bees and cattle, but trees and flowers, vinegar and wine, were, like human beings, considered liable to take offence, and their spirits accordingly to be pacified by kind treatment, since, according as their several temperaments predisposed them, they were able, by deserting, dying, turning sour, or other untoward conduct, to resent neglect or disrespect on the part of their owners.

Other popular traditions strengthen this interpretation. In Normandy and Brittany it is thought that bees will not suffer themselves to be bought or sold; in other words, that they would take offence if made the subjects of sale and barter.† The same belief prevails in Cheshire, Suffolk, Hampshire, Cornwall, and Devonshire. The value of bees is measured, not by money, but by corn, hay, or some other exchangeable commodity; in Sussex, if any money is given for bees, it must be gold. Connected with this idea of the quasi-humanity of bees is the world-wide fear of slighting dangerous animals by calling them by their human names. Mahometan women dare not call a snake a snake lest they should be bitten by one; Swedish women avert the wrath of bears by calling them old men. Livonian fishermen, when at sea, fear to endanger their nets by calling any animal by its common name. At Mecklenburg, in the twelve days after Christmas, the fox goes by the appellation of the "Long Tail;" even the timid mouse by that of the "Floor-runner." The Esthonians at all times call the fox "Gray Coat," the bear "Broad-foot," and should they take the liberty of too often mentioning the hare, their flax crops would be in peril. In Sweden people dare not mention to any one in the course of the day the number of fish they have caught, if they would catch any more; a feeling to which is probably related the North Country prejudice against counting one's fish before the day's sport is over. Many savages, when they kill any animal, apologise to it for the injury, of which their weapons and not themselves, they tell it, have been the cause. But, what is still more curious, there are some customs even in relation to trees which seem only explicable on the theory of their being endowed with a conscious personality, as, for instance, the old Saxon habit of praying to the Elder before lopping it of its branches, or the attempt to secure the continued favours of fruit trees by presents and prayers. It is, or was, customary in Devonshire and Cornwall, on Christmas Eve, for the parishioners to walk in procession to the chief orchards, and after singling out the chief tree, to salute it with set words, and to

\* Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, "Aberglaube," cases 576, 664, 698, 898. These practices, even if no longer existent, throw light upon those that still are.

† Amélie Bosquet, *La Normandie pittoresque*, p. 217.



sprinkle it with cider, putting cakes of toast and sugar soaked in new cider on the branches. And farmers do the same by their respective orchards and trees. The salutation takes the form of a prayer to the tree to be fruitful next year, and the custom also prevails in Sussex, being there known as apple-howling. In many parts of Germany the trees are bound round with straw at Christmas time, while at Reichenbach at Christmas a hole is dug at the foot of the fruit trees and *some money placed there*, to cause them to be gracious for the ensuing year. It is this last practice which explains the meaning, otherwise unintelligible, of the cakes and straw, for the association of all of them with Christmas points evidently to a community of origin and idea. Lastly, the custom which prevails in some parts of Germany, of beating trees with rods on Holy Innocents' day, to incite them to fruit bearing, must be taken as belonging to the same low phase of mental development with the other instances we have cited, in which the most obvious marks of natural differentiation have as yet been insufficient to produce corresponding distinctions in the mind of the beholders.

Fetishism, or the attempt to control external phenomena by witchcraft, though the lowest stage of religious conception, yet in its primary idea of a sympathy or identity existing between an original and its image, manifests some degree of intellectual advancement. For the idea of vicarious or representative influence, that if you wish to injure a man you can do so by an injury to a bit of his clothing or a lock of his hair, is, so far as it goes, a spiritual idea, presupposing notions about the interdependence of nature, and as far as possible removed from what we understand by mere materialism. Materialism indeed is one of the latest growths of the human mind, whilst spiritualism is one of its earliest. For to a savage, everything that exists lives and feels like himself, and the unseen spirits that surround and affect him are as the motes in a sunbeam for variety and number. Yet the fetishistic mode of thought is undoubtedly a low, and to us an absurd one. Burnings in effigy may probably be traced to it, and the stories so common in the annals of witchcraft of waxen images stuck with pins or burned, in order to injure the persons they represented, undoubtedly belong to it. In Sweden, there are still cunning men who can strike out a thief's eye by cutting a human figure on the bark of a tree and driving nails or arrows into the representative eye; and the Finns are said to this day to shoot in the water at images of their absent enemies. In Suffolk, in the last century, if an animal was thought to be bewitched, it was burned over a large fire, under the idea that as it consumed away the author of its bewitchment would consume away too. In Anglesey it is still believed that the name of a person inscribed on a pipkin, containing a live frog stuck full of pins, will injuriously affect the bearer of the name. And there are a numerous set of popular traditions which clearly relate to the same state of thought. There is a feeling so wide that it may be called European, that cut hair should always be burned, never thrown away: the reason given in France, in the Nether-



lands, in Denmark, and near Saalfeld in Germany, being, that its discovery by a witch would subject its owner to sorcery; that generally given in England and also in Swabia being, that if a bird took any of it for its nest the bearer would suffer from headache or lose the rest of his hair. A similar idea prevails about teeth: all over England children are taught to throw extracted teeth into the fire, lest a dog by swallowing them should induce the toothache. So with the nail that has scratched you, or the knife that has cut you,—keep the nail or knife free from rust, and the wound will not fester. Again, fetishism lies at the root of most popular charms for certain complaints. The remedies for warts, for instance, are all vicarious. Both at home and abroad the most usual method is to rub a black snail on the wart, and then to hang it on a hedge, trusting to the sympathetic decay of wart and snail. But a piece of stolen raw meat, a stalk of wheat or a hair with as many knots in them as there are warts on the hand, or two apple halves tied together, will, if applied to the part and then buried, cause effectual relief. The essential thing is to ensure the decay of the representative object. In Somersetshire a good ague cure is to shut up a large black spider in a box and leave it to perish, that spider and ague may disappear together. In many places, it is thought that the whooping-cough may be transferred to a hairy caterpillar tied in a bag round the neck: as the insect dies the cough will go. And in Devonshire some of the patient's hair is given to a dog between two slices of buttered bread, that the dog may take the hair and cough together; whilst in Sunderland the head is shaved and the hair (risking we must suppose a headache) left on a bush for the birds to carry off, that the cough itself may pass to them. But all such practices are but little removed from those actually existent among the lowest savages. New Zealanders, for instance, believe that men are subjected to *makutu* or witchcraft, through their food or anything belonging to them being so treated as to ensure the rage of their Atua. And Sir John Lubbock, speaking of modern savages, uses words which equally apply to, and throw remarkable light upon, some traditions we have mentioned. "A mysterious connexion is supposed to exist between a cut lock of hair and the person to whom it belonged. In various parts of the world the sorcerer gets clippings of the hair of his enemy, parings of his nails, or leavings of his food, convinced that whatever evil is done to these will react on their former owner. Even a piece of clothing, or the ground on which a person has trodden, will answer the purpose, and among some tribes the mere knowledge of a person's name is supposed to give a mysterious power."\* Have we not here a key to the wide-spread custom of burning cut hair or extracted teeth, of which we have seen that the original reason is still remembered in many places, though in others it has been altered by time? Have we not seen the pernicious use to which the knowledge of a person's name still exposes its owner in Anglesey? And

\* *Prehistoric Times*, 471.

may we not conclude that such customs and fancies betray a mental constitution radically different from our present one, taking us back and ever reminding us of the savagery of our lineage as surely as do flint-flakes or bone-needles, and teaching us that only by the slowest degrees can emancipation be achieved from the superstitions, or, as some think, the poetry, of ignorance?

Totemism, or the worship of natural objects, is one of the earliest stages in the religious development of humanity. Trees, stones, waters, stars, serpents, or animals, are all to this day worshipped far and wide by uncivilized races, and the marks of a similar object-worship by the Aryan race still survive in many a popular tradition. A law of Canute earnestly forbade the heathenship of reverencing "the sun or moon, fire or flood, waterwhylls, or stones, or trees of the wood of any sort;" yet, if such things are no longer worshipped, it may be certainly said that some of them are still revered. To take, for instance, tree worship. The trees which occupy the most prominent place in European folk-lore are the elder, the thorn, and the rowan or mountain ash. In the midland counties still elder is never bound up with other faggots, for the Cross, they say, was made of its wood; and in Suffolk, for the same reason, it is the safest tree to stand under in a thunderstorm, and misfortune will ensue if ever it is burned. But the legend of the Cross is evidently an aftergrowth, an attempt, of which we have so many examples, to give a Christian colour to a heathen practice; for the elder was the tree under which, in pre-Christian times, the old Prussian Earth-god was fabled to dwell. In Lower Saxony peasants used to pray to the elder, on their knees, with bare head and folded hands, before they dared to lop off its branches.\* In Denmark a twig of elder placed silently in the ground is a popular cure for tooth-ache or ague, whilst no furniture, least of all a cradle, may be made of its wood; for the tree is protected by the Elder-mother, who would strangle the baby as it lay asleep; since without her consent not a leaf may be touched. So also about Chemnitz, elder boughs fixed before stalls keep witchcraft from the cattle; and wreaths of it hung up in houses on Good Friday, after sunset, are believed to give immunity from the ravages of caterpillars. Like the elder, the whitethorn was once an object of worship, for it too is held to be scatheless in storms; and how else can we account for the fact that in Switzerland, as in the eastern counties of England, to bring its flowers into a house is thought to bring death, than by supposing it was once a tree too sacred to be touched, and likely to avenge in some way the profanation that was done to it? Too deeply rooted in popular veneration for its sacred character to disappear, the Church, in course of time, wound its own legend round it, and by the fiction that its wood had composed the Crown of Thorns, deprived the worship of its heathen sting. But if round the elder and the thorn feelings of reverence once

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\* Grimm himself was an eye-witness of this: *Deutsche Mythologie*, p. 375.

gathered and still linger, yet more is it true of the rowan. In England, Germany, and Sweden its leaves are still the most potent instrument against the darker powers: Highlanders still insert crosses of it with red thread in the lining of their clothes, and Cornish peasants still carry some in their pocket and wind it round the horns of their cattle in order to keep off evil eyes. In Lancashire sprigs of it are for the same reason hung up at bedheads, and the churn staff is generally made of its wood. It used to stand in nearly every churchyard in Wales, and crosses of it were regularly distributed on Christian festivals as sure preservatives against evil spirits. But this is another attempt to Christianise what was heathen, for the ancient Danes always used some of it for their ships, to secure them against the storms which Rân, the great Ocean God's wife, with her net for capsize mariners, was ever ready and desirous to raise. Now the rowan in heathen mythology was called Thor's Helper, because it bent to his grasp in his passage over a flooded river on his way to the land of the Frost Giants; and it has been thought that the later sanctity of the tree may be due to the place it occupied in mythological fancy. Yet it seems more reasonable to trace the myth to a yet older superstition than to trace the superstition to the myth. For from the exceeding beauty of their berries the rowan and the elder and the thorn would naturally impress the savage mind with the feelings of actual divinity, and would consequently lend themselves to the earliest imaginings about the universe of things. It is more likely that they progressed from a divinity on earth to their position in mythology than from their position in mythology to a divinity on earth, for the mind is capable of employing things for worship long before it is capable of employing them for fable. Worship is the product of fear, and fable of fancy; and before men can indulge in fancy they must be free from fear.

Certain traditions relating to birds and beasts are only explicable on the supposition that they were once objects of divination or worship. The old Germans, we know from Tacitus, used white horses, as the Romans used chickens, for purposes of augury, and divined future events from different intonations of neighings. Hence it probably is that the discovery of a horse-shoe is so universally thought lucky, some of the feelings that once attached to the animal itself still surviving round the iron of its hoof. For horses, like dogs or birds, were invariably accredited with a greater insight into futurity than man himself; and the many superstitions connected with the flight or voice of birds resolve themselves into the fancy, not inconceivable among men surrounded on all sides by unintelligible tongues, that birds were the bearers of messages and warnings to men, which skill and observation might hope to interpret. Why is the robin's life and nest sacred, and why does an injury to either bring about bloody milk, lightning, or rain? The Christian legend says that it extracted a thorn from the crown of Christ, or that it daily bears to hell a drop of water to put out the flames, and accounts in either way for the red dye on its breast. But this is evidently a

medieval gloss to some heathen belief, like the reason for the unluckiness of the magpie, that it would not enter the ark, but sat jabbering outside over the drowned world ; or like the idea of the aspen still trembling at the part it played in the Crucifixion. It has been suggested that the robin, on account of its colour, was once sacred to Thor, the god of lightning ; yet, is it not possible that its red breast singled it out for worship from among birds, just as its red berries the rowan from among trees, long before its worshippers had arrived at any ideas of abstract divinities ? All over the world there is a regard for things red. In the Highlands women tie some red thread round the cows' tails before turning them out to grass in spring, and tie red silk round their own fingers to keep off the witches : and just as in Esthonia, mothers put some red thread in their babies' cradles, so in China they tie some round their children's wrists, and teach them to regard red as the best known safeguard against evil spirits.

Indeed, one of the chief lessons of Comparative Folk-Lore is a caution against the theory which deduces popular traditions from Aryan or other mythology. We have already alluded to the fact that in parts of China the same feelings prevail about the swallow as in England or Germany. But there are yet other analogies between the East and the West. A crowing hen is an object of universal dislike in England and Brittany ; and few families in China will keep a crowing hen.\* The owl's voice is ominous of death or other calamity in England and Germany, as it was in Greece (except at Athens) ; but in the Celestial Empire also it presages death, and is regarded as the bird which calls for the soul. And the crow also is in China a bird of ill omen. Is it not therefore likely that all popular fancies about birds and animals have begun in the same way, among the same or different races of the globe, and were subsequently adopted but never originated by mythology ? May it not be that certain birds or animals became prominent in mythology because they had already been prominent in tradition, rather than that they became prominent in tradition because they previously had been prominent in mythology ? For instance, instead of tracing a dog's howling as a death omen to an Aryan belief that the dog guided the soul from its earthly tenement to its abode in heaven, may we not suppose that the myth arose from an already existing omen, and that the latter arose, as omens still do, from a coincidence which suggested a connection subsequently sustained by superficial observation ? The St. Swithin fallacy, which arose within historical memory and still holds its ground in an age of scientific observation, well illustrates how one striking coincidence may grow into a belief, which no amount of later evidence can weaken or destroy. Just so, if it happened that a dog howled shortly before some calamity occurred to our Aryan forefathers, thousands and thousands of years ago, long before they had attained to any thoughts of

\* Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, ii. 328.

soul or heaven, we can well imagine that the dog, which already betokened death, should, when they came to frame the myth, be conceived as the guide which was waiting for the soul to take it to heaven, and that the belief thus perpetuated by the myth might survive to the latest ages. It at all events militates against the exclusively Aryan nature of the belief, and exemplifies the extraordinary coincidence of ideas among different people, that the Esquimaux lay a dog's head by the grave of a child, for "the soul of a dog can find its way everywhere, and will show the ignorant babe the way to the land of souls!"\*

We have abundant evidence in the practices to this very day, or till lately, prevalent in England and Europe, that the worship of the sun or its representative, fire, a higher and therefore a later form of totemism than the worship of plants or animals, once formed part of early Aryan religion. The passing of children through the fire is not only a Semitic custom, but extends wherever the human mind has attained to the idea of purification and sacrifice. Some North American tribes used to burn to the sun a man-offering in the spring, to the moon a woman-offering in the autumn, expressing thereby their sense of the blessings of light and a desire for their continuance. And traces of such fire-worship and of its accompanying human sacrifices lasted in Europe into the very heart of this century, and in many places still survive. The similarity that exists between them, both in their seasons and mode of observance, even if not conclusive of their actual relationship, illustrates the marvellous sameness of ideas which may be found among people in widely remote districts of the globe.

The three great festivals of the Druids took place on Mayday Eve, on Midsummer Eve, and on All Hallow-e'en. On those days went up from cairns, toothhills, and Belenian heights fires and sacrifices to the sun-god Beal: and from such fires the lord of the neighbourhood would take the entrails of the sacrificed animal, and, walking barefoot over the ashes, carry them to the Druid who presided over the ceremonies. These fires have descended to us as the famous Beltane fires, lit still, or till lately, in Ireland, Scotland, North England, and Cornwall, on the eve of the summer solstice and at the equinoxes, usually on hill tops, with rejoicing and merriment and leaping through the flames on the part of all ages and sexes of the population.† There is reason to think that this

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\* Sir J. Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times*, p. 409, quoted from Crantz.

† There are several derivations for Beltane or Bealteine: 1. From Beal or Belus, the Phenician god, the worship being supposed to be of Phenician origin; 2. from Baldur, one of the gods of Valhalla who represented the Sun; (3) from lá-day, teine = fire, and Beal = the name of some god, but not Belus: (4) from Paleteine, Pales' fire, the worship being identified with that of the Roman goddess Pales, who presided over cattle and pastures, and to whom, on the 21st of April, prayers and offerings were made. At the Palilia shepherds purified their flocks by sulphur and fires of olive and pine wood, and presented the goddess with cakes of millet and milk, whilst the people leaped thrice through straw fires kindled in a row. Yet we should probably



leaping through the flames is a relic of the time when men fell victims to them. For in the Highlands, where at the Beltane feast an oatmeal cake is toasted and portions of it drawn for blindfold by the company as they sit in a trench round a grass table, whosoever is the drawer of that portion which has been purposely toasted black is devoted to Baal to be sacrificed, and must leap perforce three times through the flames. In the same country it is, or was, customary on Yeule or Christmas Eve to burn in a cartload of lighted peat the stump of an old tree, which went by the name of Callac Nollie, or Christmas Old Wife. And in several Continental traditions we find the memory of a sacrifice still adhering to Midsummer Eve, or St. John the Baptist's Vigil. On that day, in Livonia, one or two old boats were burned to the songs and dances of young and old; whilst at Reichenbach, in the Voightland, a May-pole, planted on the green, was, after similar festivities, thrown into the water. On Midsummer Eve many watermen still refrain from committing themselves to the Elbe, the Unstrut, or the Elster, from the belief that upon that day those rivers require a sacrifice; and the Saale is avoided for the same reason on Walpurgis, or Mayday Eve as well. From the latter cases we may infer that, where rivers flowed near, a sacrifice by water was substituted for one by fire, which possibly explains the custom so common in many places in connection with these Beltane fires of rolling something lighted down a hill, and, if possible, into a river. At Conz, on the Moselle, a burning wheel was rolled down the hill into the river, and Scotch children at the Beltane feast used to roll their bannocks three times down a hill before consuming them round a good fire of heath and brushwood. So in Swabia, wheels of lighted straw were rolled down the Frauenberg, and on Scheiblen-Sonntag the young people still go by night to a hill, and after dancing and singing round a fire, swing wooden wheels by means of a stick round and round till they are thoroughly alight, and then fling them down the hill. In North Germany, where the fires take place at Easter instead of at Midsummer, lighted tar-barrels are rolled down the Osterberge. The Church, to sanctify these fires, made the day of John the Baptist coincident with Midsummer-day, and taught that the heathen customs were symbolical of Christian doctrine. The fires themselves signified the Baptist, that burning and shining light who was to precede the true light; whilst the rolling wheels, as they represented the gradual descent of the sun in heaven after it had reached the highest point, so they illustrated the diminution of the fame of John, who was at first thought to be the real Messiah, till on his own testimony he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." It has

be right if we connected the Palilia and the Beltanes, not as directly borrowed one from the other, but as co-descendants from one and the same origin.

Mr. Forbes-Leslie speaks of Beltane fires still to be seen in 1865. The Beltane feast proper was on May-day, but the word was also applied to fires kindled in honour of Bel on other days, as on Midsummer Eve, All-Hallow-e'en, and Yeule, now Christmas. (*Early Races of Scotland*, i. 120-1.)

even been attempted in recent times to show that the Midsummer fires, in spite of all their heathen surroundings, were really of Christian origin, and in some way connected with John the Baptist. The two chief objections to this theory are, the survival of heathen names for the fires, as for instance, among others, the name *Himmelsfeuer*, and not the usual *Johannisfeuer*, in one of the districts of Upper Swabia, and also the close analogy, both in the idea and mode of purification, which exists between the Midsummer fire for men and the Needfires for cattle.

Needfires were fires through which cattle were driven if any disease broke out amongst them. Such a fire was lit in Mull in 1767, and was not only the method lately employed in Lower Saxony, but is said to be still actually prevalent in Caithness. Fire was thought to heal, or rather to purify, because it was thought to drive away evil spirits, which in savage estimation cause or constitute natural disease. The essential thing was that all fires in the neighbourhood should be first extinguished and new ones relit by means of friction for the cattle to go through. The virtue lay in the new virgin fire uncontaminated by previous use for any purpose whatsoever; and the Forlorn Fires, which are said to be still lighted in Scotland when any *man* thinks himself the victim of witchcraft,\* agree closely in ceremonial with the Needfires for cattle. A notice having been given to all the householders within the two nearest streams to extinguish all lights and fires on a given morning, the sufferer and his friends on the day cause the emission of new fire by a spinning-wheel or other means of friction, and having spread it from some tow to a candle, thence to a torch, and from the torch to a peatload, send it by messengers to the expectant houses. But similar purificatory effects were attributed to the Midsummer fires. As far as their light reached, crops enjoyed immunity from sorcery for a year, and the ashes collected from them were a constant insurance against calamities of all sorts. Leaping through them was held to avert malignant spirits for a year, and in many places not only did men leap, but cattle were driven, through the flames. Hence there is reason to think that the Midsummer fires were simply annual and public Needfires, resembling the yearly harvest feast of the Krikhs of North America, among whom, as among the ancients who annually imported fresh fire from Delos to Lemnos, there was an idea of a new and purified life commencing with a new and pure flame, after all fires, debased by their subservience to human needs, had been first extinguished. The same idea has been found among the Indian tribes of South America. For it was the duty of their high-priests "to guard the Eternal Fire in the Rotunda; and, in the solemn, annual festival of the Busque, when all the fires of the nation were extinguished, the high-priest alone was commissioned, in the temple, to reproduce the celestial spark and give new fire to the community." †

We see, then, in this most remarkable identity of conception between

\* Stewart, *Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders*, p. 149.

† Jones's *Antiquities of the Southern Indians*, p. 21. New York, 1873.

our forefathers and the native tribes of America, that there is nothing exclusively Indo-Germanic in the holiness ascribed to virgin-fire, and that there is no need to ascribe to Phœnician influence customs which occur where such influence is improbable. The wheel ignited by friction of its axle, it has been suggested, was an emblem of the sun, and the old Aryan belief that when the sun was hidden by clouds, its light was extinguished and needed renewing, which could only take place by some god working a "pramantha" in its cold wheel till it glowed again, has been referred to as the possible root of the custom. But here again it is better to refer the myth to the custom than the custom to the myth, and this, too, on psychological grounds. For the mind can no more produce images without objects of sense than the Israelites were able to make bricks without straw. Every myth, therefore, must presuppose the actual experience of all images employed in its construction.

It may here be noticed in connection with the sacrificial customs which were once a part of the heathen fire-worship, that the idea of a sacrifice to appease an angry spirit that has caused a disease is still far from extinct. The burial of a live animal is still believed in Wärend and North Sweden to prevent the cattle-plague, and an instance of such a sacrifice to the earth spirits is said to have occurred in Jönköping so recently as 1843. In Cleveland if a cow casts a calf, the untimely product is buried beneath the threshold of the cow byre in order to avert a similar disaster, and a lamb that is dropped dead or dies young is hung up in a rowan or a thorn. And in Moray not long ago, whenever a herd of cattle was seized with the murrain, one of them was buried alive, just as in the North-west Highlands and in Cornwall a black cock is buried alive on the spot where a person is first attacked by epilepsy; or, as in Algeria, one is drowned in a sacred well for a similar purpose. A case is even cited in this century of an Englishman who burned a live calf to counteract the attacks of evil spirits.\* Near Speier in Germany, if many hens or pigs or ducks died in quick succession, one of them was thrown into the fire, though the idea here seems not to have been to appease the spirit that afflicted, but to burn the spirit that was in, the victim. And, lastly, the Esthonians, in case of fire, used to throw in a black living fowl to appease the flames.

English country boys, when on the sight of a new moon they turn the money in their pockets to ensure a constant supply there, have no idea of the reason that once underlay the practice. But a wide comparison of customs supplies us with a key; for we find everywhere a prevalent mental association between the increase or wane of the moon and the increase or wane of things on earth. Maladies, it is thought, will wane more readily if the medicine be taken in the moon's wane, and wood cut at that time will burn better, just as, on the other hand, crops are more likely to be plentiful if sown whilst the moon is young, and

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\* Lancashire Folk-Lore, p. 63.

marriages more likely to be happy. So in some English counties pigs must be killed at the same season, lest the pork should waste in boiling. In Germany the new moon is the season to enter a new house, or to count money which it is desired may increase; it is also the best time for the father of a family to die, for in the latter half of the month his death would portend the decrease of his whole family. An invalid in face of a waning moon should pray that his pains may diminish with it. Hence, too, the French idea that hair cut in the moon's wane will never grow again, or the similar one in Devonshire and Iceland, that the rest will fall off; and hence probably the popular English belief that the weather of the new moon foreshadows the weather for the month. But are all these fancies relics of old moon-worship, of the existence of which we have other evidence, or simply expressions of that feeling once so prevalent that there existed an intimate sympathy between man and nature, and that everything which affected the former was in some way or another typified by the latter? Analogy seems to favour the latter hypothesis. For instance, all along the East coast of England it is thought that most deaths occur at the fall of the tide, a sympathy being imagined between the ebbing of the water and the ebbing of life; and it is curious that Aristotle and Pliny entertained a similar idea, the former with respect to all animals, the latter only about man; and though Pliny's observation of the fact was instigated by the statement of his predecessor, it is likely that the latter was led to the inquiry by the notoriety of a popular belief. The Cornish idea that deaths are delayed till the ebb-tide, or the Icelandic one that more blood flows from sheep killed while the sea is running out, or that chimneys smoke more if built when the sea is running in, may be cited as similar instances. The inhabitants of Esthonia, if a wolf runs away with a lamb, think, by a kind of sympathy, to cause the wolf to drop it by themselves dropping something out of their pockets. And in parts of England to this day, the bloodstone is the remedy for a bleeding nose, and nettle-tea for a nettle-rash; just as turmeric was once applied to the jaundice on account of its yellow colour, and the lungs of a fox were held good for asthma on account of that animal's respiratory powers.

Water-worship, whether as river, lake, or spring, seems as widely spread as that of trees or other natural objects, and the numerous traditions connected with it form yet another link between our civilised present and our barbarous past. "There is scarcely," says a writer on Lancashire Folk-Lore, "a stream of any magnitude in either Lancashire or Yorkshire, which does not possess a presiding spirit in some part of its course."\* A water-spirit that haunts some stepping-stones near Clitheroe is still believed once in every seven years to require a human life; nor is it long since a farmer in Anglesea had to drain a well belonging to him on account of the damage done by persons resorting thither, under the belief that if they cursed the disease they suffered from and dropped pins about

\* Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk-Lore*.

the well, they would shortly be cured. There is still a pin-well in Northumberland, and another in Westmoreland, wherein country girls in passing throw an offering of pins to the resident spirits. So in Ireland, votive rags may yet be seen on trees and hedges that surround sacred wells, whither people travel great distances in order to crawl an uneven number of times in the sun's direction round the water, hoping thereby to propitiate the fairies and to avert sorceries.\* St. Gowen's well on the coast of Pembroke is still frequented for the cure of paralysis and other maladies, and there are few counties in England where the dedication of curative wells to Christian saints does not betray the attempt to hallow and hide a heathen practice under a Christian name. In Northamptonshire alone we find St. Lawrence's at Peterborough, St. John's at Bough-ton, St. Rumbald's at Brackley, St. Loy's at Weedon-Loy's, St. Dennis' at Naseby, St. Mary's at Hardwick, and St. Thomas' at Northampton. So in Normandy, people still resort from all parts of the province, on the eve of June 1, to the fountain of St. Clotilde, near Andelys, and there are other French wells of no inferior celebrity. And just as English peasants propitiate had water-spirits by presents of pins, so do the Bretons by slices of bread and butter; and the Livonians, before starting on a voyage, calm the sea-mother by a libation of brandy.† But water, in addition to its dangerous and curative properties, is supposed to contain prophetic ones as well. Thus the Castalian fountain in Greece was prophetic, and as the Laconians, by cakes thrown into a pool sacred to Juno, used to augur good or bad to themselves according as the cakes sank or floated, so do our Cornish countrymen by dropping pins or pebbles into wells read futurity in the signs of the bubbles.

The belief in evil spirits, which underlies many of the foregoing superstitions, as it is one of the earliest beliefs of the human mind, and long prior to any idea of beneficent powers, so it is one of the most persistent. The worship of water, fire, and other natural objects probably arose from a dread of spirits thought to be resident within them, whom it was as well to cajole by gifts and prayers. Earth and air, like fire and water, were peopled respectively with unseen demons, which survive in still current traditions of the Gabriel Hounds, the Seven Whistlers, fairies, elves, and all their tribe. Our countrymen in Cornwall, if the breeze fail whilst they are winnowing, whistle to the Spriggian, or air-spirits, to bring it back; and the Esthonians on the Gulf of Finland do, or did, precisely the same. In Northamptonshire, till lately, women used to sweep the hearth before they went to bed, and leave vessels of water for the ablutions of the fairies or spirits of the earth, just as in Siberia food is placed daily in the cellar for the benefit of the Domavoi or house spirits.

\* Sir W. Betham, *Gael and Cimbri*. 1834. "The branches of a tree near the Stone of Fire Temple in the Persian province of Fars were found thickly hung with rags, and the same offerings are common on bushes round sacred wells in the Dekkan of India and Ceylon." (Forbes Leslie, *Early Races of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 163.)

† Schiefner, *Introduction to Sjögren's Livische Grammatik*. St. Petersburg, 1861.



In Scotland green patches may still be seen on field or moor left uncultivated as "the gudeman's croft," by which it has been hoped to buy the goodwill of the otherwise evil-disposed Devil or earth-spirit; and it is doubtless from a similar fear of showing neglect or disrespect that Esthonian peasants dislike parting with any earth from their fields, and in drinking beer or eating bread recognise the existence and wants of the earth-spirit by letting some drops of the one and some crumbs of the other find their way to the floor.\*

Hence, if the surmise be correct that worship of natural objects in its ultimate analysis is due to a desire to propitiate the powers supposed to animate them, the whole mass of folk-lore which has been shown to be connected with the worship of trees, or animals, or fire, or water, is traceable primarily to ignorant fear. But so is much more of it besides. The dread of witches, or of persons who have allied themselves with invisible beings, springs from the same source, and from the belief in witches again flows a volume of absurd superstitions, such, for instance, as the universal custom of turning homewards on meeting an old woman early in the morning, or the bad luck attributed to seeing a hare, a cat, a magpie, or any other form into which it is easy for a witch to transform herself. And from such ideas, again, flow the supposed antidotes to sorcery; the efficacy, for example, of salt, so generally among the first presents given to babies, or carried in the pocket or shoe, by persons on their way to be married, as is the case in Brittany and North Germany.

But the belief in evil spirits affords the best explanation for a set of customs no less curious than disagreeable and ridiculous. We allude to the world-wide superstitions connected with spitting and sneezing. Many Englishmen spit if they meet a white horse, a squinting man, or a single magpie, or if, inadvertently, they step under a ladder, or wash their hands in the same basin with a friend. In Lancashire, boys spit over their fingers before beginning to fight; travellers on leaving home spit on a stone and throw it away; market people spit on the first money they receive in the day. Swedish peasants spit thrice if they cross water after dark, and even the æsthetic Athenian used to spit if he met a madman. So the savage New Zealand priest spits on the two sticks, which, according as one of them falls uppermost, are to foreshow the result of a coming battle. Indeed, this unpleasant habit seems an universal charm for bringing good luck or averting bad, but for what conceivable reason than that the mouth was once regarded as the portal by which evil spirits got into a man and by which alone they could be forced to make their exit? The Messalians used to make spitting and nose-blowing a part of their religion, for they hoped thereby to free themselves from the demons with which they fancied the air to be full. This single case contains, probably, the key to all the others.

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\* The instances of Esthonian superstitions are taken from Grimm's collection in the *Deutsche Mythologie*. Their date is 1788. The same interest attaches to them from an archaeological point of view, whether they exist still or have become extinct.

But why should sneezing be so generally regarded as a bad omen, and one to be averted if possible by felicitations and blessings? One explanation is, that as it was the sign of returning convalescence during the plague at Athens, congratulations were offered when the crisis was past; another, that during a great plague which raged in Germany in the 6th century, and began its fatal course with a fit of sneezing, it was usual to exclaim, "May God help you now," as soon as the sad death-signal was heard.\* But the custom is of far wider extent and older lineage than such explanations imply; and the only possible hypothesis is one that adapts itself to all races and all times. In New Zealand, a mother repeats a charm when her child sneezes, lest any evil result in consequence,† and English nurses do just the same. In the Netherlands a sneeze gives a witch power over a person, unless some one invoke a blessing from heaven, and in these facts probably lies the real explanation. For, taking into account that every bodily derangement is regarded by savages as possession by evil spirits, and that sneezing is always the precursor of those temporary bodily derangements, often very severe, which we know as "colds," may it not be that in those early times, when to precede is the same as to cause, a sneezing fit was set down as the sign or cause of such an approaching possession, and charms employed to counteract its effects? If a cold was ever held to be a bewitchment, we can understand the use of charms and blessings at the earliest stage of the premonitory symptoms. As an involuntary act, a sneeze would, like all other natural phenomena, be a portent significant of, and entailing, a series of consequences; and in course of time, as men improved in observation and distinctions, it would grow to be even auspicious under certain circumstances. Thus in our own country it is a good sign on some days of the week, but a bad one on others; and in Scotland an infant is under fairy spells until it sneezes, a belief apparently connected with the absurd idea of the incapacity of idiots to sneeze. In Greece, also, the distinctions drawn about it raised sneezing to an art; for whilst it was unlucky in the afternoon, or when food was being cleared away, or if it occurred three times, or more than four, or on the left-hand side; if it occurred among persons in deliberation, or two or four times, or in the morning, or on the right-hand side, it was accounted a lucky omen. We read that Themistocles, by a judicious sneeze on his right-hand side, persuaded his soldiers to fight, and Xenophon, by a similar act in the middle of a speech, was elected general. And on another occasion a sneeze from a linesman just before a battle was considered so ominous that public prayers were deemed necessary in consequence.

Such instances of actual Folk-Lore as have been collected, many of them now mere meaningless survivals, seem to us only to be accounted for on the ground that they have descended to us either from the earliest inhabitants of Western Europe, or from times when our Aryan progenitors

\* Hahn, *Geschichte von Gera*, vol. i. p. 287.

† Shortland, *Traditions, &c., of New Zealanders*. 1856, p. 131.

were perhaps not unlike modern Tasmanians. We have tried to establish the existence, not only in England but throughout Europe, of phases of thought and modes of worship closely similar to those still found among actual savages. There is no nation that we know in the present or read of in the past so cultivated as not to retain many spots from the dark ages of its infancy and ignorance; but these, absurd as they may seem, hold the rank and claim the interest of prehistoric antiquities.

But it may be urged that no necessary antiquity can be asserted of traditions simply on account of the wide area they range over, and instances may be cited of Christian superstitions no less widely extended than many we have mentioned. The belief, for instance, that about midnight on Christmas Eve, cattle rise on their knees to salute the Nativity, is found with slight modifications in England, Brittany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. In Cornwall a strong prejudice exists against burying on the north side of a church, and precisely the same feeling is found in Esthonia, for the reason there given that at the end of the world all churches will fall on that side. So, too, the custom of opening all doors and windows at a death, to give free outlet to the departing soul, prevails no less in the south of Spain than in England or in parts of Germany.

To this objection there are two answers: first, that the capacity of superstitions to spread widely and rapidly is by no means denied; secondly, that many Christian traditions are really heathen, though their origin and meaning may now be lost. For the policy of the Church towards paganism, though at times one of radical opposition, was generally one better calculated for success. It learned to prefer gradual triumphs to speedy conquests, aware that the former were more likely to last, and was pleased to satisfy its conscience and hide its impotence under connivance and compromise. It assimilated beliefs which it could not destroy, and glossed over what it could not erase, substituting simply its saints and angels for the gods and spirits of older cults. On Monte Casino, near Rome, there existed down to the sixth century a temple sacred to Apollo, till St. Benedict came and, like another Josiah, broke the idols and overthrew the altar and burned the grove, but set up a temple to St. Martin in its stead. And this case is typical of the way in which obstinate heathen rites were diverted and customs consecrated. Some instances may well be added to those already incidentally alluded to, since they serve to explain how so many relics of heathenism have resisted centuries of Christian teaching. The Scandinavian water-spirit, *Nikur*, inhabitant of lakes and rivers and raiser of storms, whose favour could only be won by sacrifices, became in the middle ages St. Nicholas, the patron of sailors and sole refuge in danger; and near St. Nicholas' church at Liverpool there stood a statue of the Christian saint, to whom sailors used to present a peace-offering when they went to sea, and a wave-offering when they returned. So it was with sacred trees and flowers and waters. Their sanctity was transferred, not destroyed. St. Boniface, with the

wood of the oak he so miraculously felled, raised an oratory to St. Peter, to whom were henceforth paid the honours of Thor. Nobody ventured the more to touch the famous oak at Kenmare when blown down by a storm, because it had been handed over to the protection of St. Columba, nor did a fragment of St. Colman's oak held in the mouth the less avert death by hanging because it had been sanctified by the name of a saint. The Breton princes, before they entered the church at Vretou, offered prayers under a yew outside which was said to have sprung from St. Martin's staff, and to have been so replete with holiness that the very birds of the air left its berries untouched. The great goddess Freja could only be banished from men's thoughts by transferring what had been sacred to her to the Virgin Mary; and the names of such common plants as Lady's Grass, Lady's Smock, Lady's Slipper, Lady's Mantle, and others, attest the wrong done to the northern goddess. Bits of seaweed called Lady's Trees to this day decorate many a Cornish chimney-piece, and protect the house from fire and other evils. The Ladybird was once Freja's bird, and Orion's belt, which in Sweden is still called Freja's spindle, in Zealand now belongs to her successor Mary. In the same way Christmas has supplanted the old Yule festival, and the Yule log still testifies to the rites of fire-worship once connected with the season. So we now keep Easter at the time when our pagan forefathers used to sacrifice to the goddess Eostre, and hot cross-buns are probably the descendants of cakes once eaten in her honour, on which the mark of Christianity has taken the place of some heathen sign.

Such then is the evidence which Comparative Folk-Lore affords in support of the theory that the people from whom we inherit our popular traditions were once as miserable and savage as those we now place in the lowest scale of the human family. The evidence that the nations now highest in culture were once in the position of those now the lowest is ever increasing, and the study of Folk-Lore corroborates the conclusions long since arrived at by archaeological science. For, just as stone monuments, flint knives, lake-piles, or shell-mounds point to a time when Europeans resembled races where such things are still part of actual life, so do the traces in our social organism of fetishism, totemism, and other low forms of thought, connect our past with people where such forms of thought are still predominant. The analogies with barbarism which still flourish in civilised communities seem only explicable on the theory of a slow and more or less uniform metamorphosis to higher types and modes of life, and we are forced to believe that before long it will appear a law of development, as firmly established on the inconceivability of the contrary, that civilisation should emerge from barbarism, as that butterflies should first be caterpillars, or that ignorance should precede knowledge. It is in this way that superstition itself may be turned to the service of science.

J. A. FARRER.

## A Week among the Maoris of Lake Taupo.

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ON Wednesday, Nov. 11, 1874, the writer found himself on the borders of Lake Taupo, at Tapuaeharuru, a town consisting of an inn and a military outpost. Long had it been his wish to reach the great lake, with its giant volcano, Tongariro, its geysers, and its memories of Maori chiefs, and Maori courage, and Maori cruelty. Yet when he arrived, on a pouring November afternoon, he felt inclined to turn tail at once, and leave early next day. There before him lay Taupo Moana—"the great sea"—sure enough, lying on its bed of pumice; there flowed a warm stream, making a little inlet of the lake warm enough for a comfortable bath; there were the great jets of steam bursting from the hillsides with noise and fury; but no Tongariro was to be seen. The rain, which had fallen unceasingly for many hours, threw a dark wet blanket over the landscape. The astonishing desolation and dreary brownness of the country damped all ardour to proceed. No grass, no fern even, seemed to flourish on these desolate shores, whose only vegetation was manuka scrub, and a certain poisonous shrub which had proved fatal to a fine horse on the way. No living creatures, birds or four-footed things, had been seen, and the country, buried ages ago under a desolating storm of pumice and ashes, looked dreary and desolate as the banks of the Dead Sea. So, in melancholy mood, disappointed of his dreams, the solitary traveller sat in the inn at Tapuaeharuru, by the waters of Taupo.

The sight of another still more miserable wight revived him. A second traveller, the *ne plus ultra* of wretchedness, entered. "Give me some brandy-and-water hot, and a bed." It was about six o'clock in the afternoon, so it may be conceived that he must have been somewhat fatigued. His horse had eaten of the poisonous shrubs and died under him fifteen miles away. Over hill and dale he had tramped, in the pouring rain, guiding himself by the telegraph-posts across the roadless country. Anyone who has seen a rough volcanic country, covered with a baffling scrub, will understand the difficulties and weariness of such a walk. Tea and a little brandy-and-water gave us both courage, and we determined to voyage together up the lake next morning. Let me introduce my travelling companion as W—. Henceforth at various odd places on this globe we two "globe-trotters" kept meeting, arriving often from most diverse directions at the same spot on the same day; until at last, on arriving at New York on the way home, although I thought my friend was thousands of miles away, I looked in the travellers' list with



a sort of half-expectation, and saw his name first among the arrivals at the hotel that day.

There is a steamer at Taupo, thanks to New Zealand enterprise and to Mr. Vogel, the Prime Minister. It was to start next morning for the head of the lake. "When would it return?" "Whenever suited our convenience," was the answer. So next day we steamed peacefully over the waters for about twenty-eight miles up the lake. Everything had changed from the day before. Tongariro showed his great white snow-clad cone against the southern sky, with a light fleecy cloud hovering over his crater. Behind him Ruapehu lifted still broader shoulders and a still whiter head. The lake, blue and astonishingly clear, supported on its bosom little fleets of pebbles, and even large rocks of pumice. Its dark banks rose not unpicturesquely towards the western hills. A little bay, about half-way up on the northern side, disclosed a site of great beauty, and even a picturesque-looking house, bosomed in bright peach-trees, but falling to decay. It was a little nook, *angulus terrarum*—beautiful as those which nestle round the shores of Windermere. It was a deserted Mission Station.

At the head of Taupo, and immediately under Tongariro, lies Waihi, a Maori village, which fell by a sad disaster some forty years ago. An avalanche of soft warm mud overwhelmed the village, and buried the chief, Te Heu-Heu, grandfather of the present chief, and most of his tribe. The remnant moved but a few steps, and built the present village. Just above, on the mountain-side, can be seen the literal *fons mali*. Innumerable steam-jets burst from the soil, and give the hillside the appearance of one of our Lancashire glens when the bleach-works are in full play. We came to anchor opposite the village, and rowed away about a mile up a small stream to Tokano, another Maori settlement, where there is an inn and many geysers.

At once on our arrival, like Homeric heroes, we were led to the bath. I would that the father of Epos had viewed and described that bathing scene. It was an immersion Homeric—indescribable. The natives offered us soap! Then they led us away towards the springs. Within a small space, on either bank of the stream, innumerable geysers—some of water, some of mud, some merely of steam—rise in the soft, rich soil. There are great boiling vats of mud and of water, and little boiling caldrons. Clouds of steam rise in all directions. It requires care and circumspection to avoid the little scalding pitfalls scattered everywhere. Through the midst of all this, and across the little river, we were led towards a patch of ground by the riverside, where more than usual boiling seemed to be going on.

Arriving there we were transfixed with astonishment and amusement. The ground was as hard as stone, covered with a rock-like deposit of silica, which formed a sort of platform. As if scooped out of this were three almost circular basins, of about twelve feet in diameter, and immeasurably deep. The right and left pools were nearly boiling—

the central basin just right for a dip. In this caldron were forty-eight persons "hitched" on round the edges, shoulder to shoulder, and with heads just out of water, or sporting in the midst. We soon decided what to do; and immediately there were fifty persons instead of forty-eight, smiling and laughing, and shaking hands or rubbing noses in the water. There were all sorts and sizes, and all *en costume d'archange*. Some were old tattooed grandsires, some babies hardly able to walk; there were fathers of families and mothers of the same; young men and maidens, boys and girls laughed together. The most perfect decorum and propriety were observed. Little brown babies nestled in their fathers' arms; and the latter, to amuse us, pitched the little things into the midst, to show how they could swim. They would sink for a moment, and then disclose a little brown solemn face above the waters and strike out for their fathers' arms again. I shall never now believe that children cannot learn to swim as soon as they can walk, or before.

There was one bright-eyed Maori, handsome but cunning-looking, whose face attracted attention. On asking his name we found that this was Kingie Herekiekie, the last of a long line of Herekiekies, to whom W—— had an introduction from Sir George Grey. This chief, the legitimist head of the tribe, is a very Comte de Chambord in descent and Toryism. But what a *reductio ad absurdum*—the Comte de Chambord naked in a geyser! Suddenly the whole company caught sight of the crescent moon, with Venus almost occulted between her horns. A loud shout of *Hau-Hau!* the fanatical cry of the horrible Pai Marire superstition, startlingly reminded us that we were on the very verge of the "King" country, that pale into which entrance was then said to be death to a European. Were our good-natured friends Hau-Haus? I think it probable, though we asked no impertinent questions on this head.

The question, however, suggests the thought of one of the saddest corruptions of Christianity that ever existed among a half-taught people. The Pai Marire is a religious fanaticism which rose at the beginning of the last struggle between Maori and European, and was no doubt intended to draw a line of hatred and demarcation between the two. Its creed is a horrible mixture of Christianity, Spiritualism, and Maori superstition. Its liturgy—for its votaries framed a liturgy—is a jargon of phrases from the Prayer-book, the Missal, and the multiplication-table, and is not understood by those who use it. One phrase repeated to the writer was *Koti Pata mai merire*—said to represent "God the Father, *miserere mei*." The "service" is, in short, an incantation, for the Maori seems never to have risen from the thought of incantation—Maoricé "Karakia"—to the thought of prayer.

The practices of this novel creed are as bizarre as its liturgy. Polygamy, the Tapu, and (in war at least) cannibalism are enjoined.

Of polygamy we found no traces at Tokano or elsewhere. Man, wife, and children live together in simple patriarchal fashion, and the

morality of married life does not seem low, a strict and ancient law of "damages" being enforced.

The Tapu seemed to be in greater vogue. I approached, out of curiosity, the image of a little child set up beside a boiling spring, where a little one had been drowned, and was vociferously warned not to violate the sanctity of the spot. This same well-abused system of Tapu seems to have been not without its benefits. Its original object was, no doubt, the preservation of property, secular as well as sacred. "Earth, air, fire, water, goods and chattels, men, women, and children, were subject to its provisions."\* Chiefs and priests and all their property were tapu; their persons, especially their heads, being fearfully sacred, so that in the Maori legend, when Rehua, the genius of the forest, shook his flowing locks, and bade Rupe satisfy his hunger on the Tui-birds which came forth, Rupe religiously refused to eat the birds which had rested in the hair of so great a chief.

An infringement of the Tapu subjected the offender to various dreadful imaginary pains and penalties, of which deadly sickness was one. From these the Tohunga (priest) could absolve the penitent; but not from the operation of the "muru," the law of temporal punishment, which must take its course, though in a mitigated form.

Another very convenient provision of the law of "Tapu" rendered the bodies of chiefs sacred, so that they could undertake no menial work. In Maori language "they had no backs," and could carry no burdens. And another equally convenient provision rendered sacred any vessel or implement which a chief had used. If, for instance, a high "rangatira" (chief) happened to drink at the house of a "pakeha" (stranger), he would, after drinking, either pocket the glass or smash it, as being unfit for common use thenceforward.

For chiefs and priests, therefore, it is obvious that such an institution had its benefits; it was, as a New Zealand poet puts it, "the basis of their savage church and state."

Cannibalism seems now even physically repugnant to the Maori. Not long ago a road-maker named Sullivan was murdered, or rather executed, according to Maori notions. He had been warned not to trespass on native property, I believe, and informed of the consequences of disregarding the warning. Persisting in his work, he was put to death by the natives, and his heart is said to have been sent to the head-quarters of the native king, who at once gave orders that it should be buried. If this story be true cannibalism must be on the wane, even among the straitest Hau-Haus, as the votaries of the Pai Marire are called.

Shortly after sunset we quitted our unique bath; and returning to the little inn, we "received" during the evening three Maori chiefs, to whom W—— had letters from Sir G. Grey. They were Herekiekie, already mentioned as one of our "companions of the bath," Paurini, and Heu-Heu.

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\* *Old New Zealand, by a Pakeha Maori*

If Herekiele may be called the Comte de Chambord of Tokano, Paurini is the *preux chevalier* of his party. He was once a great warrior against the English, but is now said to have accepted the inevitable and to be a "friendly." The honourable traces of English bullets have given him a portentous ugliness. One eye and half his face, including more than half his nose, seem to have been shot away. His bravery, however, has raised him to the rank of a high Rangatira, or chief, and in influence he is said to surpass his legitimate leader, who is trusted, if report be true, by neither party. Old fires are, I fear, still smouldering, and these chiefs are actively opposing road-making in the neighbourhood of Taupo. Te Heu-Heu, the third chief, a goodnatured, easy-going individual, is grandson of him so tragically overwhelmed by the catastrophe at Waihi.

State interviews are not lively, whether with pasha or Maori chief, or any other unknown-tongue-speaking dignitary. Luckily, Mr. Hull, a Government official who accompanied us, acted as interpreter, or our interview would have passed entirely in dumb show. Sir G. Grey's letters were presented and received with much respect. It is astonishing what an affection the natives, against whom he was constantly fighting, have for this ex-Governor. The letters, in quaint Maori fashion, introduced the traveller, and always ended with the words, "Be very kind to him, for he is a friend of mine." "What," asked the chiefs, "can we do who have nothing but cabbage and potatoes?" They could show us a "Haka," was the answer.

A "Haka" is the native dance, answering to the *corroboree* of the Australian aboriginals, and we were anxious to see it. A religious scruple intervened. News of the death of one of their number had just been brought to the tribe. The village was holding a "tangi," or wailing, the melancholy sound of which could be heard in the distance. A public "Haka" was out of the question. Later in the evening, however, the complaisant Herekiele entertained a small and select party at a "Haka" in his "whare" or house (pronounced wharry). It was exactly what I expected. The performers, all male, stood in a row, one, slightly advanced, acting as fogleman. They shouted and gesticulated with the most hideous and revolting gestures, grimaces, and yells. One little imp of a boy excelled in devilry anything I ever saw elsewhere. The object of the dance seemed to be to incite to all the seven deadly sins at once. We left the hut, hoping never to see a "Haka" again. Then we went to bed, conscious of many dusky faces and glittering eyes peering at us through the darkness.

While rambling about next morning we came upon a graveyard, and on a large church-bell in its midst, lying idly in the sand, broken. It was inscribed with the following words in the Maori language, which must be pronounced like Italian, sounding, however, the aspirate: "He mea homai noa tenei kia koutou e te hunge whakapono o Mawhera (scratched out) no etahi wahine pai o kotirana, April 3, 1853"—being

interpreted, "This thing was given to you the believers of Mawhera by certain good women of Scotland, April 1853." An old woman, squatting by, explained that it was the present of Mrs. —, the missionary's wife, as "a piece of soft-soap to turn them to Christianity." This, we were assured, was the old creature's literal expression. The bell's history, as I learnt afterwards, had been full of vicissitudes. Sent out to the missionary at Mawhera by certain Scotch friends, it had only arrived in New Zealand after his death. It was then transferred to the Taupo Mission, whither it was brought from Tauranga in the following way. The chiefs sent down a party to carry it, suspended from a pole; but the men, finding it too heavy, left it by the roadside, where it lay for many months. At last Poihipi of Tapuahararu hit on an expedient. Taking a beer-barrel, he packed the bell tight therein with fern. Then it was rolled along the track for nearly a hundred miles, transported in a canoe across Lake Taupo, and set up at Tokano. The natives, having got their bell, must needs ring it, and gave a party to the neighbouring tribe to celebrate the event. All rang so heartily that the bell broke, and has lain there ever since, useless and despised.

Again we visited the bath, but this time we had it to ourselves, and it was not so lively. Its neighbours, too, on either hand, had boiled over during the night, filling it with water too hot to be comfortable, and the same evening we found it unbearable. These sudden changes of temperature are quite common, and a bath must be cautiously approached. Sometimes this quiet pool throws up a grand jet of boiling water, measured a few years ago by Dr. Hector, a New Zealand *savant*, and found to reach an altitude of 150 feet. We witnessed no such grand display. Steam and furious boiling were common, but for columns of boiling water the traveller must wait until he can visit Whaka rewa rewa, near Ohinemutu.

At the head of Lake Taupo lies Waihi, the scene of the catastrophe already mentioned. Thither we were paddled across the lake in a small dug-out canoe. Here too are hot springs, and indeed the natives rarely build except in such convenient vicinage—the little geysers are such capital neighbours. They provide hot water at all hours, and will cook, boil, even bake; in fact, do everything except light a pipe. Then on a cold night they are so very comfortable! It needs only to scoop out a little basin, let the water run in from one of the boilers, and then you can sit and warm yourself *ad libitum*.

Te Heu Heu (pronounced Te Héou-Héou) received us, and proudly showed a boat he had been building. Like the canoes, it was dug out of a single trunk, but was carefully carved with ribs on the outside to imitate a clinker-built boat—an odd instance of the survival of form where the necessity for it has ceased; just, I suppose, as the Greeks in their stone buildings preserved as ornament forms necessary in their earlier wooden architecture.

For our amusement the boat was launched, manned, and raced



against a canoe-and-six. The poor boat, though a fearfully crank affair, and manned by a crew evidently of fresh men, still beat the canoe, which had the advantage of a crew experienced in the art of paddling. Picturesqueness, no doubt, was on the side of the canoe, but neither speed nor safety, for when the wind comes down these little craft get water-logged directly. For us, however, Taupo was as smooth as glass, and our canoe was pleasant enough. Stretched at length on the fern-fronds, with a dusky native at bow and stern, paddling silently, we felt as if the flavour of civilisation had somehow departed from us for a season.

We were translated back into a lazy, sleepy, old-world existence, where Adam dived a little, but Eve had not yet learned to spin. The heathen gods were over us, with grotesque, indecent forms, grim half-human faces and gleaming eyes. Life was altogether on a different basis. It could let the days run without counting them. Who has not felt the charm of savagery? Yet I suppose one would take to drinking before six months were over.

The village of Waihi lies picturesquely on the lake, at the foot of the northern spur of Tongariro. The ground is very rich, and ferns cover the rocks. There is some little cultivation. Indeed, during our stay we saw, each morning and night, a long line of natives on their way to and from the fields. Along the shore the houses are scattered, and close to the village a fine waterfall of some 150 feet in height (I speak at a venture) falls almost into the lake. A Maori village has few features. Perhaps the most noticeable edifice is the storehouse, something between a doll's house and a dog-kennel in shape, elaborately carved, and painted red, and elevated on four posts, so as to defy the rats. There are no large buildings, such as temple or joss-house, to attest of a settled and formulated religion. Competent observers affirm that this people had no settled observances of religion, and that the "tohunga," or priest-sorcerer, was only summoned in case of sickness (generally held to be the fruit of witchcraft or of an atua, or evil spirit), death, or where some divination or spiritualism, such as raising the dead, was demanded.

One instance of his funeral ministrations the writer witnessed at Wairoa, near the famous "terraces" of Roto Mahana, where the natives are fast relapsing into their old superstition. A great chieftainess and ariki (head of a family) had been deserted by her husband, had taken to drinking, and fallen sick. A Maori had a dream that an atua (evil spirit) in the form of a dog was gnawing at her vitals. The tohunga must be sent for to exorcise it. He came, but too late, for the poor woman was dead. I "attended" the funeral, which lasted several days. A great feast was prepared; piles of kumara (sweet potato) and smoked fish were set out; vile whiskey and rum were given to all comers. The natives flocked in from every quarter, boats continually arriving across the lake, and in two days several hundred persons were gathered together. The body of the chieftainess, dressed in gaudy colours, lay in state on her bed before her whare, and women with fans continually

brushed away the flies from the dead face. Both hut and body were very "tapu." In the open space before the hut a large circle was formed, and a dolorous wailing was kept up continually. A large outer circle ate and drank, and at intervals the tohunga addressed them. Hideous and grotesque dances were danced before the eyes of the dead woman. It was, indeed, a shameful and afflicting scene of drunkenness and vice. Boys and girls, mere children, lay on the grass or staggered about laughing and drunken.

Yet here, as at Taupo, a missionary had lived and taught, doing his work in one respect so well that there was hardly a grown person in the village who could not read and write. A few steps round the turn of the hill brought us to the deserted Mission. It was a spot of the utmost beauty. We stood on a knoll overlooking Lake Tarawera, and clothed with the loveliest verdure. Behind us rose the grand pine-forests, and before, on either hand, the mountains sloped down to the lake. Just on the summit of the gentle eminence we had reached stood the little church, half-overgrown with ivy, and crowned with bell and cross. No pathway led to its porch, no trace of often-coming feet bore witness to its usefulness. We entered. There was no altar, no font, no pulpit; all was desolate. "I can remember," said my companion, "the time when two hundred people met here, Sunday by Sunday, to join in the service of the Church of England."

We passed out through the deserted graveyard and entered the garden of the old Mission. Great white calla lilies were growing wild; overhead peach-trees and acacias, ti-palms and sweet-briar, formed an avenue to the deserted house. We soon reached the little clearing before the door, and again the almost incomparable view over lake and hill was unfolded before us. To my surprise the door opened, and a venerable old man with snow-white hair and beard asked us in. It was the old Missionary himself, of whom I had heard as the most unselfish and devoted of all the workers among the Maori.

I was glad to spend the night at the Mission rather than in a Maori hut, and was given the room where at one time the Duke of Edinburgh, and at others three Colonial Governors, had slept before me. The old Missionary told me the history of the Mission. More than thirty years ago he had first come there, and bought the land for church and house from the Maori, giving 10*l*. for ten acres—then a fair and more than ordinarily liberal price. Then the church and house had been built of wood, the Missionary Society helping, but the cost of the homestead being mainly his own. Then he had set to work. His wife helped him, and they kept school together on the week-days, she teaching the women and he the men. He had taught the Maoris to plant and sow also, and the valley had soon stood so thick with corn that a mill was needed and built. On Sundays he had often gathered together as many as two hundred persons for service, and the place had seemed a little paradise. The war came; and though the people stood by the English, Te Kooti, the

great rebel leader, was upon them; and certain death was within a day's journey of the Missionary. He fled, and had never returned, to live at least, among his people. "I come back once a month," he said, "and go about and preach and talk to the people; but it seems as if I were in a dream."

The missionaries have lost heart. Those who first came out are now very old men. They have under their charge very large districts—far too large for the care of any one man; for how can one man fulfil the duty of pastor over a country extending as far as from London to York? The writer had heard much of Maori populations gathering together morning and evening for daily prayers, and of large and devout congregations on Sundays. Who has not read such accounts in missionary reports? He passed through the heart of the Maori country, saw village after village on his way, with teeming Maori population, but of prayers or services on either weekday or Sunday he saw nothing. It is usual to throw the blame on the natives, and to say that they had no aptitude for religion; but how long does it take to Christianize a nation? What would be the result of leaving an English village for ten years without any religious or secular teaching whatever, and, it may be added, without any police or magistrate?

Returning to Tapuaeharuru we visited the very curious range of geysers which here fringe the Waikato River on its exit from Lake Taupo, one of which only calls for account. It is a very singular little water-volcano, christened the Crow's Nest by the wife of the officer in command at Tapuaeharuru. It resembles the nest of a crane, being a conical mound, with a deep wide crater. A rocky cone of about eight feet in height has been formed by successive deposits of the geyser, which acts regularly at intervals of four minutes. There is just time to climb the cone, look down, and then, warned by ominous gurglings and bubblings, to retire again before an eruption. The method of irritating a geyser by a dose of sods, described by Lord Dufferin, does not succeed with the New Zealand geysers. Their throats are perhaps too wide to be choked by such a dose.

From the wife of the officer in command W—— and I received a most interesting present, consisting of a little collection of the extraordinary "vegetable caterpillars" (*Sphaerea Robertsi*) found in the North Island of New Zealand. The Maori name of this curious insect is Awheho. First appears a small caterpillar, which bores a hole in the trunk of the puriri-tree, the *lignum vitæ* of New Zealand, and forms a sort of parade-ground in the bark round the orifice, covering all up with a strong web. Soon growing too large for its apartment, it migrates to a fresh dwelling. When it has reached about one inch in circumference, and is filled with a cream-like fluid, with a central thread of blood, it buries itself in the ground at the foot of the puriri-tree, and nothing more is seen till a small succulent shoot springs up, bears a flower and seed and dies. On digging to the root the caterpillar is found, with

legs, eyes, and head, &c., complete but wooden, and with the little plant growing out of its head. Several of the caterpillars in the state described the writer has in his possession, and for the above account he has to thank Captain Mair, of the Native force, who has observed all the habits of this curious insect.

Before leaving Taupo we entertained another chief, named Pohipi—Anglicè Busby. He proved a teetotaller, for the question of total abstinence is agitating the Maori, as it is occupying the attention of so great a portion of the English-speaking world. That temperance would be the greatest of all good things for the natives of New Zealand no one is more convinced than the natives themselves. In the "king" country, governed entirely by native laws, the sale of "grog" is prohibited, and it is discouraged wherever the influence of the native chiefs prevails. By grog is meant all intoxicating liquor, and petitions against its sale are frequently sent up from natives to the Colonial Parliament. One such the writer saw, and with it will conclude this article. It was headed "The Petition of Haimona te Aoteranga, and 167 others," and was presented to the House of Representatives on August 18, 1874. "A petition from all of us whose names are signed at the foot hereof to all the Members of the Parliament, to grant this request of ours, for some law to be passed by the Assembly and the Government, affecting this evil thing grog, which is destroying us, so that a stop may be put to drinking among the Maori, for that is at the root of the evils under which we suffer. These are the evils. It impoverishes us; our children are not born healthy, because the parents drink to excess and the child suffers; it muddles men's brains, and they in ignorance sign important documents, and get into trouble thereby. Grog also turns the intelligent men of the Maori race into fools. Again, grog is the cause of various diseases which afflict us; we are also liable to accidents, such as tumbling off horses and falling into water; these things occur through drunkenness. It also leads on men to take improper liberties with other men's wives. It also is the cause of men fighting with one another. In fact, there are innumerable evils brought upon the Maori race by grog. We therefore ask for a very stringent law to be passed to keep away the evil thing from the Maori altogether."

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## Matthew Prior.

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AMONG the men of letters who have made the reign of the "good Queen Anne" (good perhaps, but dull certainly) so famous in our annals, it is remarkable that Pope alone can be said to have wholly dedicated his life to literature. For him there was no meaning in life apart from poetry, and the noble fame which poetry brought with it. His wretched physical condition and his proscribed creed were dead against him in the race for preferment and popularity. In his body he was one of the feeblest of men, so helpless that he had to be dressed by a servant, so much of a cripple that his enemies, with the gross lack of good feeling frequently displayed in that age, sneered at him as a hunchback. But Pope possessed invincible courage, and knowing well his powers, and seeing that there was but one road open to him, resolved to rise in it above all competitors. With his poetical contemporaries, on the other hand, literature, although in some cases heartily appreciated, was used as a means rather than an end. It was the ladder by which they hoped to ascend to competence or fortune, not the goal towards which they directed their most wistful glances. In those days the first rungs of this ladder were usually climbed by verse-making. Addison, who is probably the only writer that ever gained an official post by a simile, having compared Marlborough's "mighty soul" at Blenheim to an angel who

" — pleased th' Almighty's orders to perform  
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm,"

advanced, a conqueror himself, from one position to another until he reached his highest elevation as Secretary of State; Tickell, who also gained place by his verses, was Under-Secretary. Steele held three or four offices, and had no one but himself to blame for his pecuniary misfortunes. Congreve, thanks to the *Old Bachelor*, received from Government an income of twelve hundred a year, and was supposed at least to perform certain duties in return. Yalden and Atterbury were successively bishops of Rochester. John Hughes, whose friendship with Addison does him far more honour than his verses, was Secretary to the Commissions of the Peace; Rowe, the author of *Jane Shore* and the *Fair Penitent*, held for three years of Anne's reign the post of Under-Secretary, and at the accession of George I. was made one of the Land Surveyors of the Port of London and Clerk to the Council of the Prince of Wales. Nor was this all, for the Lord Chancellor Parker, "as soon as he received the Seals, appointed him, unasked, Secretary of the Presentations." Swift, the most robust intellect of the age, was also the most neglected. His position was



as strange as his genius was extraordinary. During the Administration of Harley and St. John he was probably the most influential man in the country. Those Ministers treated him as their intimate friend, called him by his Christian name, made abundant use of his marvellous ability, and at last, as a reward for his services, sent him into exile to live on the income of a poor Irish deanery. But Swift, unfortunately for his prospects of advancement, was a clergyman, and the Queen's repugnance to the author of *A Tale of a Tub* was too invincible to be overcome. Although Swift, in telling Stella of his promotion, says he is less out of humour than she would imagine, he finds it difficult to conceal his disgust. "I confess," he wrote, "I thought the Ministry would not let me go, but perhaps they can't help it." This was no doubt the case. Swift could push the fortunes of other people, but not his own, and it is not to be wondered at that so respectably pious a queen as Anne should have disliked the author of what she must have regarded as a profane book, a book, too, the wit of which she was quite unable to appreciate. It was thus that Swift missed the preferment attained by almost all his literary contemporaries, whether clergymen or laymen, and no doubt Mr. Henry Morley is right in saying that if the Dean had not written *The Tale of a Tub* he would have died a bishop.

Perhaps in all that circle of wits there was no man whose advancement from a low estate to high official honours was more signal than that of Matthew Prior. He was, indeed, apart from his literary gifts, a man of considerable ability, ready with speech as with pen. His address must have been winning, his skill as a diplomatist considerable, and his general culture entitled him to respect at a time when even statesmen were very partially educated, and when one of the reasons given for making St. John Secretary of State was, that he was the only person about the Court who understood French. Men of what we are accustomed to call low origin have always been able to rise in England, since, notwithstanding our class distinctions, the field for determination and genius is a wide one in a free country. Matthew Prior, or "Mat Prior," as he was familiarly called by his associates, came of so obscure an origin that his birthplace, like that of Congreve, is open to conjecture. He was born in 1664, and placed by his uncle, a tavern-keeper near Charing Cross, at Westminster School, then under the charge of the renowned Dr. Busby. Samuel Prior's tavern appears to have been frequented by the nobility, and there the young scholar and poet was discovered by the Earl of Dorset, reading Horace. Lord Dorset, himself a small poet and a splendid patron of poets, was afterwards praised by Prior in language which may have been sincere, but which to modern ears sounds ridiculously extravagant. "The manner in which the Earl wrote," he says, "will hardly ever be equalled; every one of his pieces is an ingot of gold, such as, wrought or beaten thinner, would shine through a whole book of any other author; his verses have a lustre like the sun in Claude Lorraine's landscapes; his love poems convey the wit of Petronius in the softness of Tibullus; his

satire is so severely pointed that in it he appears what his great friend the Earl of Rochester (that other prodigy of the age) says he was—

‘The best good man, with the worst natur’d Muse.’

Yet so far was this great author from valuing himself upon his works that he cared not what became of them, though everybody else did. There are many things of his not extant in writing, which, like the verses and sayings of the ancient Druids, retain an universal veneration, though they are preserved only by memory.” Moreover his virtues, according to his panegyrist, were as conspicuous as his genius; he was the model of all that is great and noble; and for his charity, we can scarce find a parallel in history itself. That Prior, like Dryden, should have absurdly praised the man who had done his best to serve him was in accordance with the taste of the age, and the poet who found a patron was bound to render him such return as a poet best could. Prior was transferred by his munificent friend from the “Rummer Tavern” to St. John’s College, Cambridge, where a far greater poet gained, a hundred years later, such education as a university could impart to a Wordsworth. One of his first literary efforts at the university was in conjunction with an acquaintance whose advancement in the State was destined to be yet more distinguished than his own. In 1687 John Dryden, who had discovered the truth of the Roman Catholic faith soon after the accession of a Roman Catholic king, published his famous poem *The Hind and the Panther*. It called forth a number of replies, both serious and burlesque, of which one only, entitled *The Country Mouse and the City Mouse*, written by Charles Montague and Matthew Prior, can be said to have survived. Montague was the son of a younger son of a nobleman, and, like Prior, was educated under Busby. The two Westminster boys went to Cambridge in the same year, and the good fortune of Montague, like that of his friend, appears to have been due in the first instance to a knack of verse-making. To call him a poet would be as absurd as to call an organ-grinder a musician, but his lines on the death of King Charles started him on the road to fortune. He was born for the House of Commons, and once there, as Macaulay observes, his life during some years was a series of triumphs. “At thirty he would gladly have given all his chances in life for a comfortable vicarage and a chaplain’s scarf. At thirty-seven he was First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a Regent of the Kingdom.”

Prior, who knew that as a poet he was beyond comparison superior to Montague, and that even of this parody the best part was his work, grumbled at the speedy promotion of his literary partner. But his own advancement was at hand. In 1691 he was appointed secretary to the Embassy which joined the Congress at the Hague, and afterwards received the post of Gentleman of the Bedchamber to King William. When Mary died he wrote an elegy on her death, addressed to the King in an exhausting number of stanzas. It is after the manner of such loyal poems, and no doubt Dr. Johnson is right in his conjecture that William

never read it, for Prior himself complains that the King did not understand poetical eulogy. If he had read this threnody he would have learnt that he was the sun whose auspicious light could alone give joy to the mourning nations, and whose sublime meridian course must atone for Mary's setting rays; that half of him was deified before his death; that from Mary's glory angels trace the beauty of her partner's soul; and how, to quote the final stanza—

Alone to thy renown 'tis given  
Unbounded through all worlds to go,  
While she, great saint, rejoices Heaven;  
And thou sustain'st the orb below.

It seems impossible to conceive that anyone, whether king or commoner, would care to read a mechanical piece of verse like this, but such poems were then the fashion, and were written and endured, no doubt, simply because they were fashionable. Prior, a courtier by nature, never lost an opportunity of discovering and celebrating kingly virtues, and his *Carmen Seculare*, a poem published five years later, "one of his longest and most splendid compositions," according to Dr. Johnson's verdict, is perhaps as good a specimen as the age could show of encomiastic verse. But it is a dreary specimen notwithstanding.

Biography was an art little practised in Prior's time, and the characteristic details handed down to us respecting the poet's official life are comparatively few and insignificant. What there are, however, will be worth recording, for they show that he filled the posts assigned to him with dignity and tact. In 1697 Prior was appointed secretary to the English negotiators at the Treaty of Ryswick, the conclusion of which caused such abounding joy in England. The same year he was nominated principal Secretary of State in Ireland, and in 1698 he was secretary to the Embassy in France under the Earl of Portland and the Earl of Jersey. Lord Macaulay has described this embassy, "the most magnificent that England had ever sent to any foreign Court," with his accustomed wealth of detail and picturesqueness of style. The passage referring to Prior, however familiar, deserves to be transcribed, since it is impossible to relate the anecdotes contained in it more briefly or in such felicitous language:—

"Prior was Secretary of Legation. His quick parts, his industry, his politeness, and his perfect knowledge of the French language marked him out as eminently fitted for diplomatic employment. He had, however, found much difficulty in overcoming an odd prejudice which his chief had conceived against him. Portland, with good natural abilities and great expertness in business, was no scholar. He had probably never read an English book; but he had a general notion, unhappily but too well founded, that the wits and poets, who congregated at Will's, were a most profane and licentious set; and being himself a man of orthodox opinions and regular life, he was not disposed to give his confidence to one whom he supposed to be a ribald scoffer. Prior, with much address, and, per-

haps, with the help of a little hypocrisy, completely removed this unfavourable impression. He talked on serious subjects seriously, quoted the New Testament appositely, vindicated Hammond from the charge of Popery, and, by way of a decisive blow, gave the definition of a true Church from the nineteenth article. Portland stared at him. 'I am glad, Mr. Prior, to find you so good a Christian. I was afraid you were an atheist.' 'An atheist, my good Lord?' cried Prior. 'What could lead your Lordship to entertain such a suspicion?' 'Why,' said Portland, 'I knew that you were a poet, and I took it for granted that you did not believe in God.' 'My Lord,' said the wit, 'you do us poets the greatest injustice. Of all people we are farthest from atheism. For the atheists do not even worship the true God whom the rest of mankind acknowledge; and we are always invoking and hymning false gods whom everybody else has renounced.' This jest will be perfectly intelligible to all who remember the eternally recurring allusions to Venus and Minerva, Mars, Cupid, and Apollo, which were meant to be the ornaments, and are the blemishes, of Prior's compositions. But Portland was much puzzled. However, he declared himself satisfied; and the young diplomatist withdrew, laughing to think with how little learning a man may shine in courts, lead armies, negotiate treaties, obtain a coronet and a garter, and leave a fortune of half a million."

Prior's wit and readiness of repartee were not always exercised on men as thick-headed as Portland, and it was during this residence in Paris that he received attentions from distinguished Frenchmen like the Prince of Condé and Bossuet. Then, too, it was that on seeing at Versailles the pictures painted by Le Brun to commemorate the victories of Louis XIV., he was asked whether King William's palace was similarly adorned? and made the famous reply, "The monuments of my master's actions are to be seen everywhere but in his own house." At all times and in all places the poet proved himself a distinguished courtier, and his conversation and manners were warmly praised by the French King, "a circumstance," says Macaulay, "which will be thought remarkable when it is remembered that his Majesty was an excellent model and an excellent judge of gentlemanlike deportment, and that Prior had passed his boyhood in drawing corks at a tavern, and his early manhood in the seclusion of a college."

It has been said, on grounds that will scarcely bear examination, that he was not a good man of business. Pope says Prior was nothing out of verse, but then Pope disliked Prior. Swift, a far better judge, writes highly of his abilities in the management of affairs, and Lord Bolingbroke, addressing Queen Anne, states that Prior is "the best versed in matters of trade of all your Majesty's servants," a remark which it is probable Lord Macaulay had in his mind when he observes that, like Montague, Prior was distinguished by an intimate knowledge of trade and finance. That King William, who cared not a jot for literature, and was, therefore, not likely to be prejudiced in Prior's favour in consequence of his genius as a poet, did

thoroughly confide in him, is a strong proof of his qualifications as a man of affairs. Another proof is to be found in the fact that in the year after the French Embassy, Prior, having served for a time as Under-Secretary of State, was made Commissioner of Trade. In 1701 he was elected member for East Grinstead. Three years later, when Harley became Secretary of State, and St. John, who, according to Swift, was much the greatest commoner in England, Secretary at War, Prior, like his friend Swift, some years later, joined the Tory party, and lent his wit to the support of his new associates. Some years passed, of which, so far as concerns Prior, we have no record, but in 1711 he was privately appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of France in order to negotiate a peace. "Prior," writes Swift to Stella, "has been out of town these two months, nobody knows where." Yet he conjectures he had been to France. In a letter to Queen Anne King Louis writes, "I shall expect with impatience the return of Mr. Prior, whose conduct is very agreeable to me." In 1712 the treaty-maker went again to Paris as Ambassador, and remained there until the death of the Queen and a change of Ministry reduced him to a private station. In France in the present day a statesman or politician whose conduct has ceased to be approved is in danger of imprisonment or exile; in England a century and a half ago a public man, on the fall of his party, was liable to a similar punishment. Soon after the accession of George I. the Whig Ministers took proceedings against all concerned in the Peace of Utrecht, and when Prior arrived in England in the spring of 1715 he was subject to what he calls a "wild examination" before a Committee of the Privy Council. Great caution was needed on his part if it be true, as he says, that the Committee endeavoured to extort evidence from him which would bring his friends to the scaffold, but Prior, according to his own narrative, was equal to the emergency. The examination lasted a week, and the ex-Ambassador was then ordered into close custody. Two years, of which we have no record, were spent in prison. In 1717, when an Act of Grace was passed, Prior was excluded from it, but he obtained his discharge shortly afterwards, and in the following year produced by subscription a folio edition of his poems, published in splendid style by Tonson. In the long list of titled subscribers, of dukes and earls, of lords and bishops, it is pleasant to read the names of Pope and Steele, of Gay and Swift. The Dean, careful though he was about expenditure, took five copies, which must have cost him ten guineas. The poet spent the rest of his days in the country, and died at Wimpole, a seat of the Earl of Oxford, in 1721, in the 58th year of his age. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, under a ponderous Latin epitaph, for which, including the monument, he left 500*l.* in his will.

It was quite possible in the last century, as it had been in the Elizabethan age, for men of considerable mark in politics or literature to pass off the scene without the danger so common in our time of being done to death again in a biography. To edify us in these garrulous days, two, three, or even four volumes are often dedicated to the memory of third-



rate men and women ; in Queen Anne's age a writer or statesman of first-rate eminence was generally dismissed with a memoir that would now be considered brief in a biographical dictionary. It was not that writers possessed in those days, any more than in these, "the talent of silence," but that their communicative power was exercised in other channels.

Prior was distinguished as an ambassador and poet, and yet our knowledge of him, and especially "of his behaviour in the lighter parts of life," is very slight indeed. For some years Swift and Prior were constantly together, and in the journal to Stella Prior's name is mentioned more than fifty times. The writer was a great satirist as well as one of the shrewdest observers that ever lived, yet to Prior's character, to his manners, even to his personal appearance, we find only the most incidental allusions. It may be worth while, however, to glean a few grains from this field. No doubt, like all poets, Prior loved praise. "He was damped," says Swift on one occasion, "until I stuffed him with two or three compliments;" at another time he writes, "Prior and I sat on, when we complimented one another for an hour or two upon our mental wit and poetry." Then we learn that Prior was always a good courtier, and was always mindful to attend the Lord Treasurer's dinners. Drinking, says his friend, will not do with Prior's lean carcase. Even statesmen were not ashamed to get drunk in those days, and men with weakly constitutions suffered accordingly. Swift observes that Prior had generally a cough, which he called a cold, and, in allusion to their frequent walks round the Park, he adds, "This walking is a strange remedy. Mr. Prior walks to make himself fat, and I to bring myself down." Men of letters in that Augustan age seem to have avoided matrimony. Swift and Pope, Thomson and Gay, Congreve and Fenton, were bachelors, and the few who did marry were either, like Addison, unfortunate in their choice, or like Parnell, in the brief duration of their happiness. Prior, who was also a bachelor, lived the careless and licentious life of a man about town, and the female companionship he selected for himself was of the coarsest description. He was a member of the Kit Cat Club and of the famous Brothers' Club, started by St. John for "the improvement of friendship and the encouragement of letters." But although living as the associate and equal of noblemen and statesmen, his tastes were unrefined, and it is stated that after spending an evening with Bolingbroke, Pope, and Swift, he would smoke a pipe and drink ale with a common soldier and his wife in Long Acre. This soldier died shortly before the poet, and Arbuthnot observes that Prior had a narrow escape by dying, since, had he lived, he would have married the widow. The truth is, there was no greatness in Prior, whether moral or intellectual. There is not in him even the robust masculine sense which in some men and some authors is a substitute for greatness. He could say fine things—it was he who said, and he deserves the praise of it, "I had rather be thought a good Englishman than the best poet or greatest scholar that ever wrote"—but his poetry, like his life, has no affinity with what we deem lofty and noble. Prior had

ambition, as all men must have who lead a successful career, but he had no aspirations. He walked in the plain, and never breathed the pure invigorating air of the mountains. His philosophy, if he had any, was to make the best of life, and to take as his rule the Horatian maxim, "*Quid sit futurum cras fuge querere; et quem fors dierum cumque dabit, lucro appone.*" In his Solomon thought is called the worst of evils, and he is constantly reiterating the sentiment that thought only serves to deepen the sadness of life:—

If we see right we see our woes;  
Then what avails it to have eyes?  
From ignorance our comfort flows;  
The only wretched are the wise.

In *Alma*, a droll discourse on the seat of the soul, from which Voltaire has taken many ideas and much foulness,\* Prior makes his friend Richard say—

Sir, if it be your wisdom's aim  
To make me merrier than I am,  
I'll be all night at your devotion—  
Come on, friend; broach the pleasing notion;  
But if you would depress my thought,  
Your system is not worth a groat.

And the conclusion of the poem suggests that wisdom, since it makes one sad, is of little worth, and that the solace of the bottle is to be preferred to the sage maxims of philosophers. It is generally unsafe to attempt to supply, by the help of a poet's verse, the deficiencies of his biographer; but Prior frequently writes about himself in an easy colloquial strain, and if there be some jest in his song, there is also a considerable share of truth. There is a little piece, for instance, written at the Hague, that is drawn, no doubt, from the life, in which he describes himself as released from the cares of business, and driving

In a little Dutch chaise on a Saturday night,  
On my left hand my Horace, a nymph on my right.

And when in a piece written for his own monument he says he was industrious and grave in public employments, and merry when alone with his friends, we may safely take the assurance for something more than a poetical fancy; for we know that he was to be trusted in official life, and we know also that he was a man eminently sociable, a great diner-out, a lover of good cheer, a maker of puns, and an entertaining companion. Men like Harley, Bolingbroke, and Swift would not have been attracted again and again to Prior's house if their host had not been agreeable. It is remarkable too that in that age of bitter animosities and coarse vituperation few words save those of kindness were uttered with regard to Prior. Pope said that he was "not a right good man," and for once in his life probably spoke the truth, since the courtly ambassador and

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\* M. Taine.

brilliant poet practised low vices;\* but Prior, unlike Pope, appears to have proved himself sincere and faithful to his friends. His faults were like the faults of Tom Jones, not like the faults of Blifil.

The reader of Prior's poetry will be struck by its variety, and this variety, according to Dr. Johnson, has made him popular. He began his poetical life by writing a burlesque; he ended by producing *Solomon*, a long didactic poem, which, according to John Wesley, and to Hannah More who echoed his opinion, is one of the noblest poems in the English language, and which, in the estimation of that very remarkable critic the Rev. George Gilfillan, whose judgments on poetry are sometimes as amusing as a jest-book, contains in it touches of nature little inferior to Shakespeare. We fear that even these criticisms will not induce many readers now-a-days to read *Solomon*, a poem in three books, the whole of which is a soliloquy. It contains many fine passages, which are more like splendid rhetoric than poetry, and some exquisite absurdities, as, for example, when the Jewish king is made to prophesy the future greatness of Britain:—

From pole to pole she hears her acts resound,  
And rules an empire by no ocean bound;  
Knows her ships anchored, and her sails unfurled,  
In other Indies and a second world.  
Long shall Britannia (that must be her name)  
Be first in conquest and preside in fame—

or, when in love with a beautiful woman, he declares that in her "jetty curls ten thousand Cupids played," or when an angel is sent to give him the sound but commonplace advice—

Now, Solomon, remembering who thou art,  
Act through thy remnant life the decent part.

All poetry save the highest has a tendency to go out of fashion, and there is nothing sadder in the history of literature than the pages which illustrate the gradual oblivion of writers once famous and popular. When De Quincey observed that every age buries its own literature, he did but exaggerate a painful truth; a large portion of it no doubt becomes utterly extinct, or is but dragged to the light for a few hours by

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\* It is but just to observe that John Wesley denies the report made by Spence and others with regard to Prior's licentiousness—a report which is in a measure confirmed by the looseness of his verses—and he adds the following curious statement with regard to the poet's Cloe. "Others say his Cloe was ideal. I know the contrary. I have heard my eldest brother say her name was Miss Taylor; that he knew her well; and that she once came to him (in Dean's Yard, Westminster) purposely to ask his advice. She told him, 'Sir, I know not what to do. Mr. Prior makes large professions of his love, but he never offers me marriage.' My brother advised her to bring the matter to a point at once. She went directly to Mr. Prior, and asked him plainly, 'Do you intend to marry me or no?' He said many soft and pretty things; on which she said, 'Sir, in refusing to answer, you *do* answer. I will see you no more.' And she did see him no more to the day of his death. But afterwards she spent many hours, standing and weeping at his tomb in Westminster Abbey."

some hungry book-worm, to be once more placed, not always with reverence, amidst congenial dust. Prior, we beg our readers to remember, was once a famous poet. Did he not gain 4,000*l.* by the publication of his verses, were not his principal pieces translated into Latin and French, and did not Johnson (long years after the poet's death) declare that Prior was a lady's book, and that no lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library? On the strength of this statement from that archpriest of morality we do not recommend any lady to venture upon an indiscriminate perusal of Prior; but the Doctor's assertion is a proof, at all events, that more than fifty years after the poet's death he retained a place amongst authors familiar to general readers. Another and still more striking evidence of Prior's popularity is the way in which many of his thoughts were appropriated by contemporary poets, as well as by writers who belonged to a later period of the century. It has already been observed that Voltaire borrowed many ideas from *Alma*. Southey has pointed out that from Prior Pope has adopted some of the most conspicuous artifices of his verse; and this remark, which is quite true, scarcely covers all Pope's obligations to his brother-poet. Gray and Collins, the greatest lyric poets of the century, are not without some traces of indebtedness to the same source. Charles Wesley's well-known hymn, commencing:—

Lo! on a narrow neck of land  
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,

was, there can be little doubt, suggested by the couplet in *Solomon*:—

Amid two seas, on one small point of land,  
Wearied, uncertain, and amazed we stand;

and there are even traces in Cowper, one of the most original of poets, of his familiar acquaintance with Prior, who in Cowper's younger days was at the height of his fame. The use, however, which one poet makes of another, a use often involuntary, is not to be hastily set down as plagiarism. "It seems," says Pope, "not so much the perfection of sense to say things that had never been said before, as to express those best that have been said oftenest." And he adds that writers borrowing from others are like trees which of themselves would produce only one sort of fruit, but upon being grafted upon others may yield a variety. Prior, strange to say, has received his warmest eulogium from the pious founder of Methodism. John Wesley, who even in the busiest portion of his life was an omnivorous reader, and probably read more volumes through while riding on horseback or driving in his carriage than many men who with ample leisure boast of a taste for literature, was a great admirer of Prior. He frequently quotes from his poems in his letters and sermons, and devotes an essay to his defence in reply to what he considered the disparaging remarks of Dr. Johnson. He allows that he often wrote hastily, and has many unpolished lines, but considers that his genius at its best is "not inferior in strength to any besides Milton."

His tales, he observes, replying *seriatim* to the criticisms of Johnson, are certainly the best told of any in the English tongue. "Never man wrote with more tenderness. Witness the preface to *Henry and Emma*, with the whole inimitable poem." And as for the Doctor's complaint of the tediousness of *Solomon*, "I should as soon think," says Wesley, "of tediousness in the second or sixth *Æneid*!" And Prior had the honour—no slight honour surely—of being warmly praised by Cowper, who wrote of *Henry and Emma*, of which we shall have something to say presently, as an "enchanting piece," to which few readers of poetry have not given a consecrated place in their memories, and of Prior generally as a poet "who with much labour, but with admirable success, has embellished all his poems with the most charming ease."

In this criticism Cowper has hit upon the most striking characteristic of Prior's verse, its "charming ease." His poetry contains, no doubt, a large amount of mythological rubbish. Such rubbish was the product of the age, and Prior wrote as he lived, after the fashion of his time. But as a lyric poet, whose genius is stimulated by social gaiety, and whose wit is ready at command, he has no rival in his century. His position may not be a lofty one, but he fills it perfectly. As an epigrammatist he is admirable; as a writer of humorous and not over-modest tales he is excelled only by La Fontaine; his love-verses, although destitute of soul and passion, as might be expected from a man living loose upon the town, are remarkable for gracefulness and felicity of expression. He was the Thomas Moore—too often, indeed, the Tom Little—of his age, and marks of his influence may readily be traced in the sparkling effusions of the Irish poet. It may be as well to add, what some of our readers will doubtless remember, that Dr. Johnson's opinion of Prior's amorous verses differs considerably from ours. He declares that they have neither nature nor passion, gallantry nor tenderness; that they have the coldness of Cowley without his wit, and are the dull exercises of a skilful versifier trying to be amorous by dint of study. Passion they no doubt lack, and tenderness also; but they have a lightness of touch, a gallantry of tone, and, to quote the phrase aptly applied to them by Hazlitt, "a mischievous gaiety," which entitles them, we think, to a high place amongst occasional verses. It must be allowed, however, that the pieces meriting this praise are but few in number, and that the best of these are tainted with immodesty, and will not admit of quotation. If poets and versemen like Prior would but remember that by the abnegation of purity they exile themselves from the best society and the most appreciative readers in the world, they might be led to watch over their words more strictly, even if no nobler motive kept them from transgressing. A century and a half ago, however, the risk of being banished from the boudoir for over-plain speaking, and for *double entendre*, was a very slight risk indeed, and Prior's contemporaries and immediate successors, in attempting lively, society verses, were not less gross, and far less felicitous. Gay and Somerville, for instance, are oft-



coarser than Prior, but they are by no means so sparkling. Pope, the greatest poet of the age, transgresses in a manner more offensive than witty, and Swift, who possessed "the best brains in the nation," wrote the nastiest verses to be found in our language. But it is time to give an illustration or two of Prior's sportive ease and grace as a lyric poet. Thomas Moore, writing to Lord Lansdowne, alludes to one of Prior's pieces, and observes that nothing could be more gracefully light and gallant. No wonder that it pleased the Irish poet, for the conceit in it is so like some of his own that anyone ignorant of the authorship would at once credit Moore with the production. Listen only to the two last stanzas :—

The god of us versemen (you know, child), the sun,  
How after his journeys he sets up his rest ;  
If at morning o'er earth 'tis his fancy to run,  
At night he declines on his Thetis's breast.

So, when I am wearied with wandering all day,  
To thee, my delight, in the evening I come ;  
No matter what beauties I saw in my way,  
They were but my visits, but thou art my home.

In an ode to a lady who declines to dispute any longer with the poet, and "leaves him in the argument," he sings in language which is as free from an antique flavour, as if it had been produced yesterday :—

In the dispute, whate'er I said,  
My heart was by my tongue belied ;  
And in my looks you might have read  
How much I argued on your side.

Alas ! not hoping to subdue,  
I only to the fight aspired ;  
To keep the beauteous foe in view  
Was all the glory I desired.

But she, howe'er of victory sure,  
Contemns the wreath too long delayed ;  
And, armed with more immediate power,  
Calls cruel silence to her aid.

Deeper to wound she shuns the fight ;  
She drops her arms to gain the field :  
Secures her conquest by her flight,  
And triumphs when she seems to yield.

The qualities of vivacity and ease are well displayed in the following description of *A Lover's Anger* :—

As Cloe came into the room t'other day,  
I peevish began, "Where so long could you stay ?  
In your lifetime you never regarded your hour ;  
You promised at two, and (pray look, child) 'tis four.  
A lady's watch needs neither figures nor wheels ;  
'Tis enough that 'tis loaded with tangles and seals,

A temper so heedless no mortal can bear.—"  
 Thus far I went on with a resolute air.  
 "Lord bless me!" said she; "let a body but speak;  
 Here's an ugly hard rose-bud fall'n into my neck;  
 It has hurt me and vex'd me to such a degree—  
 See here! for you never believe me; pray see,  
 On the left side my breast what a mark it has made!"  
 So saying, her bosom she careless displayed:  
 That seat of delight I with wonder survey'd,  
 And forgot every word I design'd to have said.

As a song-writer Prior never excels, and sometimes fails ignominiously. He wrote twenty-eight songs, of which the greater number were "set to music by the most eminent masters." They are sad rubbish, although now and then a happy phrase or lively fancy reminds us that they are not the compositions of a commonplace writer. If Dr. Johnson had been thinking of these pieces when he wrote of Prior's amorous poems as the "dull exercises of a skilful versifier," we should not quarrel with his judgment, although we might complain of his indifference and forgetfulness in estimating the poet's love-verses by the least significant productions of his pen. From the context, however, it is evident he had in his mind certain of the love-pieces which do not rank under the category of songs, and he hits, as an adverse critic naturally would do, on some which are over-weighted with mythological imagery. Prior had, no doubt, as we have before observed, the poetical disease of the day, but he took it in a mild form, and manages in one or two cases, which unfortunately we cannot quote, to turn this sort of machinery to skilful account. Throughout the criticism on Prior it seems to us that Johnson dispenses his praise as well as his blame wrongly. He cannot see the consummate charm of many of Prior's occasional verses, and he praises as "eminently beautiful" a watery paraphrase of St. Paul's noble utterances upon charity. Imagine any reader turning from the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians to find beauty in lines like these:

Each other gift which God on man bestows,  
 Its proper bounds and due restriction knows;  
 To one fixt purpose dedicates its power,  
 And finishing its act, exists no more.  
 Thus, in obedience to what Heaven decrees,  
 Knowledge shall fail, and prophecy shall cease;  
 But lasting Charity's more ample sway,  
 Nor bound by time nor subject to decay,  
 In happy triumph shall for ever live,  
 And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive.

How differently the poet could write when he found a congenial topic may be seen from the bright and graceful lines he addresses *To a Child of Quality*. In reading them it may be well to remember the report that has been handed down to us of Prior's genial nature, and how when staying in Lord Oxford's house he made himself beloved by every living

thing—master, child, servants ; human creature or animal. When the poem was written, the child was five years old and the author forty.

Lords, knights, and squires, the numerous band  
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,  
Were summon'd by her high command  
To show their passion by their letters.

My pen among the rest I took,  
Lest those bright eyes that cannot read  
Should dart their kindling fires and look  
The power they have to be obey'd.

Nor quality nor reputation  
Forbid me yet my flame to tell ;  
Dear five years old befriends my passion,  
And I may write till she can spell.

For while she makes her silkworms beds  
With all the tender things I swear ;  
Whilst all the house my passion reads  
In papers round her baby's hair ;

She may receive and own my flame,  
For, though the strictest prudes should know it,  
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,  
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then, too, alas ! when she shall tear  
The lines some younger rival sends,  
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,  
And we shall still continue friends.

For as our different ages move,  
'Tis so ordain'd (would Fate but mend it !)  
That I shall be past making love  
When she begins to comprehend it.

This is not richly imaginative verse, but of its kind it is perfect ; nothing could be more felicitous in feeling or in phrase, and there are few readers that will not appreciate its charm. "Prior's serious poetry," says Hazlitt, "is as heavy as his familiar style was light and agreeable." No doubt he was more of a wit than a poet, and his happiest pieces are epigrams and society verses. Many of these read as if they had been composed impromptu ; and that the poet had this readiness in composition we know from the fact that in a company of Frenchmen he produced on one occasion some pretty extempore lines in French. No notice of Prior can be satisfactory without a specimen or two of his craft as an epigrammatist. Here is a piece entitled *The Remedy worse than the Disease* :—

I sent for Ratcliffe ; was so ill  
That other doctors gave me over ;  
He felt my pulse, prescribed his pill,  
And I was likely to recover.

But when the wit began to wheeze,  
 And wine had warm'd the politician,  
 Cured yesterday of my disease,  
 I died last night of my physician.

If Prior owes the suggestion of the following to a far greater epigrammatist, it must be allowed that he puts the thought suggested by the Latin poet into admirable shape :—

To John I owed great obligation,  
 But John unhappily thought fit  
 To publish it to all the nation;  
 Sure John and I are more than quit.

And here is one expressed with similar felicity :—

Yes, every poet is a fool;  
 By demonstration Ned can show it;  
 Happy, could Ned's inverted rule  
 Prove every fool to be a poet.

The following, written in a lady's copy of Milton, is also good, and has received high praise—higher, perhaps, than it merits :—

With virtue strong as yours had Eve been armed,  
 In vain the fruit had blushed, or serpent charmed;  
 Nor had our bliss by penitence been bought,  
 Nor had frail Adam fall'n, nor Milton wrote.

Take another, not a little severe upon Pope's friend, Atterbury, who, it may be remembered, was accused, probably with injustice, of infidelity. The lines refer to the funeral of the Duke of Buckingham, at which the Bishop officiated :—

"I have no hopes," the duke he says, and dies;  
 "In sure and certain hopes," the prelate cries:  
 Of these two learned peers, I prithee say, man,  
 Who is the lying knave, the priest or layman?  
 The duke he stands an infidel confest,  
 "He's our dear brother," quoth the lordly priest;  
 The duke, though knave, still "brother dear," he cries;  
 And who can say the reverend prelate lies?

The Rev. Henry Dodd, in his valuable work *The Epigrammatists*, has made two mistakes with regard to Prior. He observes that he ranks "among the greater poets," which is assuredly not true; and that "with a few exceptions his epigrams are of the very lowest type," which we venture to think is a blunder also. Most readers will prefer Mr. Thackeray's judgment that they have "the genuine sparkle."

A fine specimen of Prior's skill as a poetical wit is the famous burlesque on Boileau's ode on Namur, and that he does sometimes succeed in grave and thoughtful verse is proved by his ode addressed to the Hon. Charles Montagu, a poem highly praised by Warton. Warton finds also much tenderness and pathos in Prior's *Henry and Emma*, a poem which strikes us as false in conception and feeble and verbose in execution.

Yet it must not be passed by without a few words of comment, seeing that it has been warmly praised by intelligent judges. The ballad of the *Nut-Brown Maid*, upon which Prior founded his poem, describes a jealous or curious lover who tests the fidelity of his lady-love by telling her that he is a banished man, that if she flies with him she will be regarded as a wanton; and when these statements fail to daunt her, he adds that he has another lady in the woods whom he loves more than her. But even this revelation does not disturb her constancy; where-upon the lover, having tested her affection sufficiently, tells the Nut-Brown Maid that he is neither banished for his crimes nor false in his love, that he is, moreover, an earl's son, and is ready to marry her "as shortly as he can." The old ballad does not disturb one's sense of fitness like the modern version, partly, no doubt, owing to its antique flavour, and partly from the lightness and beauty of the story, which is told with the utmost simplicity. Prior's Henry, on the contrary, an unpleasant and suspicious lover of the eighteenth century, labours so hard to prove himself a scoundrel, that when at last he invokes "solemn Jove" and "conscious Venus," and beseeches the "bright maid" to believe him whilst he swears that he is no banished man or perjured knight, and asks her to excuse a trial, in the course of which he has accused her of gross immodesty, one feels vexed that Emma does not indignantly reject him instead of eagerly accepting his overtures. Not a word of reproof does she utter for his unmanly conduct, but sees in him the lord of her desire, declares that his will must dictate her fate, and asks to be allowed to employ her life subservient to his joy. The whole poem is unsatisfactory and even offensive from Henry's want of manliness, and from the lack in Emma of maidenly dignity, and we find it hard to say which of the lovers we like the least. The diction of the piece, moreover, is entirely conventional, the construction palpably mechanical, and it would be difficult to compress within an equal number of lines more wretched balderdash than Prior has written on the last page of his poem. The Queen of Beauty, so says the poet (with a fine sense of congruity which must strike every reader), being proud and pleased to hear the vow of Henry and Emma, stopped her bridled doves and called upon Mars to let Fame extol her favourite Anna's wondrous reign, and the unwearied toils of Marlborough, and afterwards, Gaul being thrice vanquished, to record, "with second breath," the triumphs of Venus, who is to be as faithful as Emma, while Mars is to copy the fidelity of Henry.

And when thy tumults and thy fights are past,  
And when thy laurels at my feet are cast,  
Faithful mayst thou, like British Henry, prove,  
And Emma-like, let me return thy love.

After this the Cyprian deity requests the "great god of days and verse" that one day may be set apart yearly for sports and floral play in honour of the true lover and the Nut-Brown Maid. What a passage



is this, and how flatly it falls upon modern ears! The vivid imagination of Keats gave new life to the old mythology, but to the Queen Anne men it was for the most part mere dead lumber, and Prior, though he turns it to clever if not poetical uses elsewhere, has failed to catch from it the slightest inspiration in this poem.

We do not like to part from Prior in a mood of disparaging criticism. Like all poets, he has his weak side. No admirer of Milton or of Wordsworth would care to dwell on their pitiful attempts at humour. Spenser is not famous for wit, or Butler for pathos. We go to Shelley, and not to Crabbe, for splendid bursts of imagination; we do not expect (M. Taine notwithstanding) an accurate description of natural objects from Pope, nor do we look to Thomson for fine satire. In the poetry of Prior there is much that had its day and its meaning which is now meaningless and dead. Few, except curious students, will read his *Alma*, still fewer his *Solomon*, although in Wesley's opinion it contains some of the finest verses that ever appeared in the English tongue; and in spite of Cowper's admiration we venture to say that not one youth or maiden in this kingdom will ever again commit to memory his *Henry and Emma*. But if we sweep away as refuse a great deal that was once admired, and admired, perhaps, not altogether unreasonably, enough remains to give Matthew Prior a high position among the poets whose bright wit and fertile fancy have been expended on occasional verses, and to justify the opinion of Mr. Thackeray that his lyrical poems are "amongst the easiest, the richest, the most charmingly humorous" in the English language.

J. D.

## Alone in London.

---

By her fault or by ill fate  
 Left in great London desolate  
 Of helpers and of comforters ;  
 Without one heart to beat with hers ;  
 Without one hand in tenderness  
 And sympathy her hand to press ;  
 A lone soul left, dispassionate,  
 Without one link of love or hate.

From her lodging, poor and bare,  
 And high up in the smoke-dim air,  
 With cheerless heart, with aimless feet,  
 She descended to the street,  
 Where the people, coming, going,  
 Ceaseless as a river's flowing,  
 Seemed as imperturbable,—  
 As though no heart-warm tear could well  
 Into those dry eyes ; no sob  
 Ever could those set lips rob  
 Of their sternness. With blind stare,  
 They pass a woman in despair.

With hopeless heart, with weary feet,  
 She wandereth on from street to street,  
 Restless as a withered leaf  
     Fallen from its parent tree,  
 Goaded by a sleepless grief,  
     Dogged by dull perplexity ;  
 Passing along, in dumb despair,  
 Deserted street and silent square.

Into the shadow black and deep  
Of a doorway she doth shrink,  
Crouching there she cannot weep,  
Waiting there she cannot think.  
As a tide by river-wall  
Lappeth ever wearily,  
Round her soul despair doth call  
Constantly and drearily.  
As round ancient gable-peaks  
The ghostly night-wind wails and shrieks,  
So again and yet again  
Rise the bitter gusts of pain.

Steps are heard upon the stone ;  
One cometh down the street alone,  
And upon the footsteps follow,  
'Mid the dark roofs echoes hollow.  
On he comes, all unaware  
Of the deep misery lurking there.  
He pauses not, but passes on ;  
She speaketh not, and he is gone.  
She thinks, "He would but reckon me  
The vile thing that I would not be."

Silence again. A wild intent  
That pang woke in her as it went.  
She goes—nought with her down the street  
But haunting echoes of her feet.

\* \* \* \* \*

She stands where far below is heard  
The river's one unchanging word.  
She stands and listens, and doth know  
Beneath the waters seaward go.  
Like an incantation drear  
She hears them wash by wharf and pier.

Will none come to save her yet?  
Her foot is on the parapet;  
Upward to a starless heaven  
One last, hopeless look is given.  
On each side stretches dark and far  
The line of roofs irregular,  
And beneath a vast night-wall  
Based in gloom funereal.

The blackness floweth up to meet  
The wanderer's world-weary feet,  
And afar below it all  
Still the river seems to call,  
"Mortal, since thou canst not live,  
Come, for I have rest to give,  
Over thee and thy sad woes  
Secretly my wave shall close,  
Spreading changeless over all,  
Like a mighty funeral pall."

A moment, agonised and mute,  
Rigid, yet irresolute,  
She stands. Then, with a bitter cry,  
But from her soul's last agony,  
Sheer down the black abyss she falls.

The river washeth by its walls.

H. B. BAILDON.

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## A Stage Iago.

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WE are pluming ourselves not a little on the revived interest in Shakspeare. Having arrived at the conclusion that Shakspeare after all was not a German, we have at last founded a Shakspeare Society for ourselves. Moreover, it cannot be denied that, with the exception of the smart comedies of Mr. H. J. Byron, and the sprightly operas of M. Lecocq, nothing is now more popular on our stage than a clever representation of one of Shakspeare's characters. We have seen an Italian Othello; we are promised another; and it is now rumoured that Mr. Irving will play the same part. Therefore it is time to cry out against the stage Iago. Mr. Macready, having on a certain night played the Moor and been called before the curtain, went home and wrote in his journal that the honour was rendered valueless by being shared with a gentleman who played Iago like a "great creeping cat." Let us drive this intrusive animal from the stage. Let us no more see this consummate diplomatist conducting himself in a manner which would make a born pauper clap his hands on his pockets.

For the truth is that this false Ancient not only misrepresents one character, but also degrades another; since it is only the almost super-human ability of the real Iago which saves Othello from contempt. When the one sneaks about the place wearing his heart upon his sleeve and seizing every opportunity for a guileful grimace, the other must appear a stupid and brutal savage with a thin Venetian polish. Not all the power of Signor Salvini could make us fully sympathise with one who was gulled by a gentleman from whom his very kitchen-wench would have hidden the spoons. And indeed it is probably owing to this poor imitation of Mephistopheles, that the great and deserved praises of Signor Salvini are so constantly directed to his exhibition of the savage fury of the Moor. Othello is a great deal more than a savage. When he has killed his wife and knows that she was true, it would be natural for him to exaggerate his jealousy as the foul cause of her death. A weaker man would break out into such cries as "O monstrous jealousy! O foul unnatural passion!" He, on the contrary, in a speech full of dignity and not wanting in self-respect, bids his hearers "nothing extenuate, nothing set down in malice," and then describes himself as "one *not easily* jealous, but, being wrought, perplex'd in the extreme." So Desdemona, strong in her instinctive trust of his nobility, says of him that he "is true of mind, and made of no such baseness as jealous



creatures are." He is a man of deep and fiery passions, but of passions which, for all their tumult, are in his own control. They are rebellious in the time of his extreme perplexity, but he curbs them until his reason is convinced.

Think'st thou,

he says,

I'd make a life of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the moon  
With fresh suspicions? No: to be once in doubt,  
Is once to be resolved.

And further—

No, Iago;

I'll see before I doubt: when I doubt, prove;  
And on the proof, there is no more but this,—  
Away at once with love, or jealousy.

Even when he is half persuaded, even in the agony of doubt, he still cries for proof.

Give me the ocular proof;

and again—

Make me see't; or, at the least, so prove it,  
That the probation bear no hinge, nor loop,  
To hang a doubt on: or woe upon thy life!

Again—

I'll have some proof.

When he is once satisfied, his pride and his sense of justice require that Desdemona should die. His passions, which have been stormy while he was still in doubt, are quiet now, and he prepares with judicial calmness to kill his wife.

Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.

He is tender to her, though he has doomed her. He kisses her. "O balmy breath," he says, "that doth almost persuade Justice to break her sword!" When, as he thinks, she weeps for Cassio's fate, his rage leaps out once more, and he fulfils his purpose.

But this purpose is not formed until Othello is convinced of his wife's faithlessness. He is convinced by the almost unnatural ability of Iago. If, instead of this paragon of subtlety, appear a foolish prating knave, with a fixed sneer and with a "We could an if we would" expression always on his face, the noble Moor becomes a wonder of stupidity, and we feel no pity for the blundering animal, whom the most common donkey-boy might tenderly lead by the nose. Therefore, as has been said before, the character of Othello is falsified by a poor representation of Iago. And therefore, if we are to see the former on the stage again, let us then see the latter, as Shakspeare made him.

What is the real Iago, the man stripped of all disguises? He is pre-eminently the man of practical ability, in the exercise of which for

its own sake he takes a pure delight. But, when he can turn his powers to a bad object, his delight is doubled. He has a great love of wickedness apart from all personal considerations. The pleasure in his own cunning, which culminates in the question—

How am I then a villain,  
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
Directly to his good?

gives place to a sublime passion for evil, as he cries

Divinity of hell!  
When devils will the blackest sins put on,  
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
As I do now.

In this moment of exaltation he feels himself worthy to rank with devils. Besides his love of wickedness, and his annoyance at the "daily beauty" of good lives, Iago has more human motives for injuring Othello and Cassio. He wishes for Cassio's place. He hates him because he was preferred before him; and doubly hates Othello for his preference. Moreover he is jealous of them both, and here we touch this man's one weakness. He reads men at a glance, and moves them as he will; but he does not understand women. He cannot even imagine the wifely purity of Desdemona, and he has never been able to make up his mind about the loyalty of his own wife.

I know not if 't be true;  
But I for mere suspicion in that kind,  
Will do, as if for surety.

As far as he understands, he is confident, but he has no faith for that which is beyond his understanding. When Emilia breaks out in noble rage, and charges him with his crime, he is surprised by her revolt.

Such is the man, with his dislike of good and his peculiar hatred of the Moor and his lieutenant, with his wonderful knowledge of men and ignorance of women, and, most of all, with his great power of devising means for the attainment of his end—such is the man who deceives Othello. He suggests every natural ground of suspicion, difference of age, difference of country, difference of colour; a foreigner's inevitable ignorance of the super-subtle women of Italy; the youth and grace of the Italian Cassio, and the fact that he "came a-wooing" with the Moor; above all he marks this cause of disquiet—

- \* She did deceive her father, marrying you;  
And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks  
She loved them most.

If a girl

Could give out such a seeming  
To seal her father's eyes up,

who had known her all his life, how easy for a wife to cheat her

husband, who is but a new acquaintance! But all this cleverness of suggestion would be wholly useless but for one other fact. Iago is a consummate actor. The real self, which has been described above, he knows, controls, and venerates. He respects his well-used talents.

For I my own gain'd knowledge should profane,  
If I would time expend with such a snipe,  
But for my sport and profit.

"Sport"—for, as has been said before, the exercise of his venerated faculties is an end in itself. Of this self, which he thoroughly knows and controls, he displays just so much to each person as will influence him in the required way; and he adds in each case just so much seeming as will suit his purposes. Thus to Roderigo he frankly shows his real hatred of Othello, and one of his reasons, the preferment of Cassio. Both to Roderigo and Othello he displays his real doubts as to the virtue of all women.

But to all men and women, except to the poor "snipe," whom nobody would believe if an officer of unblemished reputation contradicted him, Iago presents himself as one whose honesty almost oversteps the limits of good breeding. He is the blunt soldier who, if ladies will have him talk, must crack some rough jests at their expense; a man's man, a good fellow, who must have a drink and a song when he meets a comrade; one who has gained such a name for honesty that he is called honest, as Aristides was called just. When Othello has but now married Desdemona and has but little experience of her character, he gives her to the care of Iago with the words

Honest Iago,  
My Desdemona must I leave to thee.

When the first vague doubt has passed across his mind, he turns to the tempter and says—

And for I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty,  
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,  
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more.

"Good-night, honest Iago," says Cassio, who is but now persuaded to sue to Desdemona for his forfeited lieutenancy; and again, looking gratefully after him—

I never knew  
A Florentine more kind and honest.

Iago is so good an actor that his own wife is wholly ignorant of his nature. When she has picked up the handkerchief, she says

My wayward husband hath a hundred times  
Woed me to steal it.

Can any epithet be more exquisitely inappropriate? She calls him "wayward," who in carrying out his purpose moves not a hair's breadth to left or right.

Such, then, is the man, a masterly plotter and a consummate actor, who deceives Othello. He has served his great captain for years, and has slowly formed in that generous heart an absolute trust in his honesty. So, when the time comes, he can lie to him with the certainty of being believed. When he has suggested all the natural grounds for disquiet which really exist, he adds his three false statements. He repeats the speeches which, as he says, Cassio spoke in his sleep; he has seen Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's hand; he has heard Cassio boast of his good fortune. But this is not enough. If he cannot or will not give him "the ocular proof," Othello shall hear with his own ears enough to satisfy him.

So with exquisite cunning he makes the lieutenant talk of Bianca, while his other puppet, suitably placed, thinks that he hears the story of his shame.

Is not this enough to convince a trusting noble nature? Can honest Iago lie? Would Cassio boast falsely for the ruin of a noble lady? Is not the story only too probable? A young Venetian woman to be loyal to a war-worn Moor! Why in her choice of such an one may be perceived "a will most rank." How likely that a woman who has deceived her father will cheat her husband! Thus probability confirmed by the plain evidence of an unimpeachable witness amounts to proof which bears "no hinge, nor loop to hang a doubt on." Thus Othello is convinced. Nothing pleads against this weight of evidence save his instinctive faith in Desdemona, and after all how likely that this faith is but the blindness born of passion, the proverbial weakness of doting husbands!

It were absurd to suppose in these days of the revived interest in Shakspeare that any part of the above statement of Iago's character should be new to anybody. But in spite of the subtle analyses of students, who in their studies take to pieces and put together again the most complex characters, conventional creatures often wholly unlike Shakspeare's folk whose names they bear, still strut the stage. Of these creatures one of the most persistent, one of the most annoying, and one of the most harmful, is the stage Iago. Macready knew him, and writhed under his ostentatious villany. Salvini had to look the other way that he might not too often see his mocking grimaces. Are we to see him again curling his lips and screwing up his eyes at Signor Rossi, or manifesting his diabolical delight in evil under the nose of Mr. Irving? If he come, he will spoil both representations; for, though an actor may have the truest possible conception of Shakspeare's Othello, he cannot make the spectator comprehend him rightly if he be not deceived by a consummate actor. Othello is not Faust that he should sell his

soul to an obvious devil. If we cannot see the real Ancient, let us see no more Moors. The two characters depend upon each other; and if both are not rightly played neither is true. But by all means let us see the play again if we can get rid of this impostor. Let us drive out the "creeping cat" never to return, and bring in

the Spartan dog

More fell than hunger, anguish, or the sea ;

and let the Spartan dog in the presence of his victim wear the seeming of a blunt soldier, and above all a fellow of "exceeding honesty."

J. R. S.







FLINGING HIMSELF FROM HIS HORSE, HE TOOK THE BRIDLE IN HIS HAND AND TURNED TOWARDS HOME.

## The Atonement of Leam Dundas.

### BOOK II.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### CHANGES.



OUR years had come and gone since Mr. Dundas had laid his second wife in the grave beside his first, and the county had discussed the immorality of taking cherry-water as a calmant. For it was to an overdose of this that the verdict at the coroner's inquest had assigned the cause of poor Madame's awful and sudden death; though why the medicine should have been found so loaded with prussic acid as to have caused instant death on this special night, when it had been

taken so often before with impunity, was a mystery to which there was no solution. Not a trace of poison was to be found anywhere in the house, and no evidence was forthcoming to show how it might have been bought or where procured. Alick Corfield, who understood it all, was not called as a witness; and he told no one what he knew. On the contrary, he burdened his soul with the, to him, unpardonable crime of falsehood that he might shield Leam from detection; for when his father, missing the sixty minim bottle of hydrocyanic acid, asked him what had become of it, Alick answered with that wonderful coolness of virtue descending to sin for the protection of the beloved, which is sometimes seen in the ingenuous; "I broke it by accident, father, and forgot to tell you."

As the boy had never been known to tell a falsehood in his life he reaped the reward of good repute, and his father, saying quietly; "That

was a bad job, my boy;" laid the matter aside as a *caput mortuum* of no value.

To be sure, he thought more than once that it was an odd coincidence; but he could see no connection between the two circumstances of Madame's sudden death and Alick's fracture of that bottle of hydrocyanic acid; and even if there should be any, he preferred not to trace it. So the inquest was a mere show so far as getting at the truth was concerned; and Madame died and was buried in the mystery in which she had lived.

Meantime Leam had been sent to school, whence she was expected to return a little more like other English girls than she had been hitherto, and Mr. Dundas shut up Ford House—he went back to the original name after Madame's death—and left England to shake off in travel the deadly despair that had fallen like a sickness on him, and taken all the flavour out of his life. He had never cared to search out the real history of that fair beloved woman. Enough had come to his knowledge in the bills which had poured in from the Sherrington tradesmen, on the announcement of her marriage and then of her death, to convince him that he had been duped in facts if not in feeling. For among these bills was one from the local geologist for "a beginner's cabinet of specimens" delivered just about the time when he, Sebastian, had spent so many pleasant hours in arranging the fragments which Madame said represented both her knowledge and her lost happiness; also one from the Fancy Repository, which sold everything, for sundry water-colour drawings, illuminated texts, a Table of the Ten Commandments, illustrated, and the like, which sufficiently explained all on this side, and settled for ever the dead woman's claims to the artistic and scientific merit with which Mr. Dundas and the rector had credited her.

Also, certain ugly letters from a person of the name of Lowes, in London, put him on the track, had he cared to follow it up, of a deception even worse than that of pretended art or mock science. These letters, written in the same handwriting as that wherein Julius de Montfort, her brother-in-law, the present Marquis, had told her of the defalcations of the family solicitor and trustee, called Virginie, Madame la Marquise de Montfort, plain Susan bluntly, and reminded her of the screw that would be turned if the writer was not satisfied; and were letters that demanded money, always money, as the price of continued silence.

But Sebastian had loved his second wife too well to seek to know the truth, if that truth would be to her discredit. He preferred to be deceived; and he had what he preferred. He stifled all doubts, darkened all chinks by which the obtrusive light might penetrate, kept his love if not his faith unshaken, caring only to remember her as beautiful, seductive, soothing; and mourning her as deeply, doubtful as she had proved herself to be, as he had loved her fondly when he believed her honest. It was a curious mental condition for a man to cherish; but it satisfied him, and his regret was not robbed of its pathos by knowledge.

Now that the four years were completed the widower had to return to

his desolate home, and make the best he could of the fragments of peace and happiness left to him. Leam was nineteen; it was time for her to be taken from school and given the protection of her father's house. It went against the man's heart to have her; but he was compelled, if he wished to stand well with his friends, and he hoped that the girl would be found improved from these years of discipline and training, and be rational and like other people. Wherefore he came home one dry dull day in October; and the neighbourhood welcomed him, if not as their prodigal returned, yet as their lunatic restored to his right mind.

During these four years a few changes had taken place at North Aston. Carry Fairbairn had married, not Frank Harrowby—he had found a rich wife, not in the least to his personal taste, but greatly to his profit—and Carry, after having cried a good deal for a month, had consoled herself with a young clergyman from the North, whom she loved quite as much as if she had never fancied Frank at all, and spoilt in the first months by such submission as caused her to repent for all the years of her life after.

The things of the rectory were much in their old state. Little Fina, Madame's child, was there under Mrs. Birkett's motherly care; but as the child was nearly six years old now, the good creature's instinctive love for infants was wearing out, and she was often heard to say how much she wished she could have kept Fina always a baby, and—sighing—how difficult she was to manage! She was an exceedingly pretty little girl, with fair skin, fair hair, and dark eyes; wilful, of course, and spoilt, of course; the only one in the house who took her in hand to correct being Adelaide. And as she took her in hand too smartly, Mrs. Birkett generally interfered, and the servants combined to screen her; the result being that the little one was mistress of the situation, after the manner of wilful children, and made everyone more or less anxious and uncomfortable as her return for their care.

Alick Corfield was the rector's curate. On the whole, this was the most important of all the North Aston events which had taken place during the last four years. Soon after Madame's death and Leam's transfer from home to school, Alick had had a strange and sudden illness. No one knew what to make of it, nor how it came, nor what it was; but the doctor called it cerebral fever, and when the Families got hold of the word they were content. Cerebral fever does as well as anything else for an illness of which no one knows and no one seeks to know the cause, and to the origin of which the patient himself gives no clue. It was a peg; and a peg was all that was wanted.

On his recovery he announced his intention of going to Oxford to read for holy orders. His mother was piteously distressed, as might be expected. She feared all sorts of evil for her boy, from damp sheets and unmended linen to over-study, wine parties, and bold-faced minxes weaving subtle webs of fascination. But for the first time in his life Alick stood out against her insistence, and his will conquered hers. The



sequel of the struggle was that he went to Oxford; took his degree; read for orders; passed; and that Mr. Birkett gave him his title as his curate.

It could hardly be said that the relations were entirely harmonious between the military-minded rector, who held to the righteousness of helotry and the value of ignorance in the class beneath him, and the young curate, burning with zeal and oppressed with the desire to put all the crooked things of life straight. The one pooh-poohed the enthusiasm of the other, derided his belief in humanity, and assured him of failure; the other felt as if he had been taken behind the scenes and shown the blue fire of which the awful lightning of his youth was made. Mr. Birkett could not quite forbid the greater faith, the more loving endeavour which the young man threw into his ministrations, but he was the Sadducee who scoffed and made the work heavy and uphill throughout. He gave a grudging assent to the Bible classes, the Wednesday evening services at the Sunday-school, the lectures on great men on the first Monday in the month, which Alick proposed and established. He thought it all weariness to the flesh and a waste of time and energy; but the traditions of his order were strong, if he himself did not share them, and he had to give way in the end. He consoled himself with the reflection that the boy would find out his mistake before long, and that then he would know who had been right throughout.

But even zeal and hope and diligence in his work could not lighten the persistent sadness which was Alick's chief characteristic now. Gaunt and silent, with the eyes of a man whose inner self is absent and whose thoughts are not with his company, he looked as if he had passed through the fire, and had not passed through unscathed. No one knew what had happened to him, and though many made conjectures, none came near the truth. Meanwhile he seemed as if he lived only to work, and the clearer-sighted might have added, to wait.

For a further local change, Lionnet was tenanted again by a strange and solitary man, who never went to church and did not visit the neighbourhood. He was in consequence believed to be a forger, an escaped convict in hiding, or, by the more charitable, a maniac as yet not dangerous. North Aston held him in deeper horror than it had held even Pepita, and his true personality exercised its wits more keenly than had even the true personality of Madame. In point of fact, he was a quiet, inoffensive, amiable man, who gave his mind to Sanscrit for work and to entomology for play, and did not trouble himself about his own portrait as drawn in the local vernacular. Nevertheless, for all his reserved habits and quiet ways, he had learnt the whole history of the place and people before he had been at Lionnet a month.

At the Hill things remained unchanged for the ladies, save for the additional burden of years, and the pleasant news that Edgar was expected home daily. Adelaide, now twenty-four, took the news as a personal grace, and blossomed into smiles and glad humour of which only Josephine understood the source. But Josephine held her tongue, and

received the confidence of her young friend with discretion. As she had never dispossessed her own old idol, she could feel for Adelaide, and she was not disposed to look on her patient determination with displeasure. The constancy of the two, however, was very different in essential meaning. With Josephine it was the constancy that is born of an affectionate disposition and the absence of rival Lotharios; with Adelaide it was the result of calculation and decision. The one would have worshipped Sebastian as she worshipped him now, had he been ruined, a cripple, a criminal even; the other would have shut out Edgar inexorably from her very dreams had not his personality included the Hill. With the one it was self-abasement, with the other self-consideration; but it came to the same thing in the end, and the men profited equally.

All these changes Sebastian Dundas found to have taken place when he returned to North Aston with grey hair instead of brown, his smooth, fair skin tanned and roughened, and his weak, finely-cut, effeminate mouth hidden by a moustache of a reddish tint, mingled with white. Still he was Sebastian, and after the first shock of his altered appearance had been got over, Josephine carried her incense in the old way, and found her worship as dear and as tantalising as ever.

Lastly, as the crowning change of all, Leam came home from school; no longer the arrogant embittered child, looking at life through the false medium of pride and ignorance, saying rude things and doing odd ones with the most perfect unconsciousness; but well-bred, graceful, sufficiently instructed not to make patent mistakes, and more beautiful by far than she had even promised to be. Her very eyes were lovelier, lovely as they had always been; they had more variety of expression, were more dewy and tender, and, if less tragic, were more spiritual. That hard, dry, burning passion which had devoured her of old time seemed to have gone, as also her savage Spanish pride. She had rounded and softened in body too, as in mind. Her skin was fairer; her lips were not so firmly closed, so rigid in line, so constricted in motion; her brows were more flexible and not so often knit together; and her slight, lithe figure was perfect in line and movement. Still she had enough of her former manner of being for identity. Grave, quiet, laconic, direct, she was but a modification of the former Leam as they had known her—Leam, Pepita's daughter, and with blood in her veins that was not the ordinary blood of the ordinary British miss.

Her father's artistic perceptions were gratified as he met her at the station, and Leam turned her cheek to him voluntarily, with tears in her eyes. Turning her cheek was apparently her idea of kissing; but if not too intense an expression of affection, it was at least an improvement on the old hard repulsion, and Sebastian accepted it as the concession it was meant to be. Indeed, they met somewhat as foes reconciled, or rather seeking to be reconciled, and Mr. Dundas did not wish to keep open old sores. Her cheek, turned to him somewhere about the ear, represented to his mind a peace-offering; her eyes full of tears were as a confession

of past sins and a promise of amendment. Not that he understood why she was so much more effusive than of old, but if it augured a happier life together he was glad.

As they drove up to the door of the old home, crowded with memories and associations, a shudder passed over the girl; she grasped her father's hand in her own almost convulsively, and he heard her say below her breath, "Poor papa!"

He wondered why she pitied him. The place must surely be full of memories of her mother for her; why did she say "poor papa" to him? He did not see what she saw—that peaceful September evening, and the bottle of cherry-water on the table, with the little phial of thirty deaths in her hand; and now the contents emptied into the harmless draught; and now Madame pale and dead. The whole scene transacted itself vividly before her, and she shuddered at her memories and her past self—as always with a kind of vague wonder how she could have been so wicked, and where did she get the force, the courage for such a cruel crime?

For all these four years at school the shadow of that dreadful deed had been ever in the background of her life; and as time went on, and she came to a better understanding of morality, it grew clear to her as a crime. Its consciousness of guilt had broken down her pride, and thus had made her more malleable, more humble. She could no longer harden herself in her belief that she was superior to everyone else. Those girls, her companions—they had not had an Andalusian mother, truly; they did not pray to the Saints, and the Holy Virgin took no care of them; they were Protestants and English, frogs and pigs;—but they had not committed murder. If she should stand up in the middle of the room and tell them what she had done, which of them would touch her hand again? which of them speak to her? English and Protestants as they were, how far superior in their innocence to her, an Andalusian Catholic, in her guilt! But no one lives with remorse. It comes and goes gustily, fitfully; but the things of the present are stronger than the things of the past; else the man with a shameful secret in his life would go mad.

One of these gusty storms broke over Leam as she passed through the gates of the old home, and for the moment she felt as if she must confess the truth to her father, and tell him what evil thing she had done. Yet it passed, as other such storms had passed; the things of the present took their natural place of prominence, and those of the past sank again into the background, shadows that never faded quite away, but that were not actualities pressing against her.

The news of Leam's home-coming created quite a pleasurable excitement in the neighbourhood, and the Families flocked to Ford House to welcome her among them as one of themselves, all anxious to see if the Ethiopian of North Aston had shed her skin, if the leopardess had changed her spots. They were divided among themselves as to whether

she had or had not. Some said she was charming, and like anyone else; but others shook their heads, and, like experts in brain disease, professed to see traces of the old lunacy, and to be doubtful as to her cure. At the worst, however, here she was; one of themselves whom they must receive; and common sense dictated that they should make the best of her, and hope all things till they proved some.

There was one among them whom Leam longed yet dreaded to meet. This was Alick Corfield. She wondered what he knew, or rather what he suspected, and she was anxious to have her ordeal over. But though Mrs. Corfield came, and was just the same as ever, bustling, inquisitive, dogmatic, before ten minutes were over having put the girl through her scholastic facings and got from her the whole of her curriculum, yet Alick did not appear. He waited until after Sunday, when he should see her first in church, and so nerve himself as it were behind the barrier of his sacred office; but after Sunday had passed and he had seen her in her old place, he called; and found her alone.

When they met, and she looked into his face and laid her hand in his, she knew all. He shared her secret, and knew what she had done. It was not that he was either distant or familiar, cold or disrespectful, or anything but glad and reverent; nevertheless, he knew. He was no longer the boy adorer, her slave, her dog; he was her friend, and he wished to make her feel that she was safe with him—known, in his power, but safe.

"You are changed," he said awkwardly.

He thought of her as Leam, heard her always called Leam, but he dared not use the familiar name; and yet she was not "Miss Dundas" to him.

"It is four years since you saw me," she said with a grave smile. "It was time to change."

"But you are your old self too," he returned eagerly. He would have no disloyalty done to the queen of his boyish dreams; what worm soever was at its root, his royal pomegranate flower should be always set fair in the sun where he might be.

"You seem much changed too," she said after a short pause. "Graver and older. Is that because you are a clergyman?"

Alick turned his eyes away from the girl's face, and looked mournfully out on to the autumn woods.

"Partly," he said.

"And the other part?" asked Leam, pressing to know the worst.

"And the other part?" He looked at her, and his wan face grew paler. "Well, never mind the other part. There are things which sometimes come into a man's life and wither it for ever, as a fire passing over a green tree; but we do not speak of them."

"To no one?"

"To no one."

Leam sighed. No proclamation could have made the thing clearer

between them. Henceforth she was in Alick's power; let him be faithful, chivalrous, loyal, devoted, what you will, she was no longer her own unshared property. He knew what she was, and in so far was her master.

Poor Alick! This was not the light in which he held his fatal secret. True, he knew what she had done, and that his young queen, his ideal, was a murderess who, if the truth were made public, would be degraded below the level of the poorest wretch that had kept an honest name; but he felt himself more accursed than she, in that he had been the means whereby she had gotten both her knowledge and the power to use it. He was the doomed if innocent, as of old tragic times; the sinless Cain guilty of murder, but guiltless in intent. It was for this, as much as for the love and poetry of the boyish days, that he felt he owed himself to Leam, that his life was hers, and all his energies were to be devoted for her good. It was for this that he had prayed with such intensity of earnestness it seemed to him sometimes as if his soul had left his body, and had gone up to the Most High, to pluck by force of passionate entreaty the pardon he besought. "Pardon her, O Lord! Turn her heart, enlighten her understanding, convince her of her sin, but pardon her, pardon her, dear Lord! And with her, pardon me!"

The man's whole life was spent in this one wild fervid prayer. All that he did was tinged with the sentiment of winning grace for her and pardon for both. In his own mind they stood hand in hand together; and if he was the intercessor, they were both to benefit, and neither would be saved without the other. And he believed in the value of his prayers, and in the objective reality of their influence.

For the final changes in the ordering of home and society at North Aston, the week after Leam returned Edgar Harrowby came from India, and took up his position as the owner of the Hill estate; and the child Fina was brought to Ford House, and formally invested with her new name and condition as Miss Fina Dundas, Sebastian's younger daughter. Mindful of the past, Mr. Dundas expected to have a stormy scene with Leam when he told her his intentions respecting poor Madame's child; but Leam answered quietly, "Very well, papa," and greeted Fina when she arrived benevolently, if not effusively. She was not one of those born mothers who love babies from their early nursery days, but she was kind to the child in her grave way, and seemed anxious to do well by her.

The ladies all bestowed on her their nursery recipes and systems in rich abundance; especially Mrs. Birkett, who, though glad to be relieved from the hourly task of watching and contending, was still immensely interested in the little creature, and gave daily counsel and superintendence. So that on the whole Leam was not left unaided with her charge. On the contrary, she ran great risk of being bewildered by her multiplicity of councillors, and of entering in consequence on that zigzag course which covers much ground and makes but little progress,



## CHAPTER II.

EDGAR HARROWBY.

THIRTY-TWO years of age; tall, handsome, well set-up, and every inch a soldier; manly in bearing, but also with that grace of gesture and softness of speech which goes by the name of polished manner; a bold sportsman, ignorant of physical fear, to whom England was the culmination of the universe and such men as he—gentlemen, officers, squires—the culmination of humanity; a man who loved women as creatures but despised them as intelligences; who respected socially the ladies of his own class and demanded that they should be without stain as befits the wives and mothers and sisters of gentlemen, but who thought women of a meaner grade fair game for the roving fowler; a conservative holding to elemental differences whence arise the value of races, the dignity of family, and the righteousness of caste; an hereditary landowner regarding landed property as a sacred possession meant only for the few and not to be suffered to lapse into low-born hands; a gentleman incapable of falsehood, treachery, meanness, social dishonour, but not incapable of injustice, tyranny, selfishness, even cruelty, if such came in his way as the privileges of his rank—this was Edgar Harrowby as the world saw and his friends knew him, and as North Aston had henceforth to know him.

His return caused immense local excitement and great rejoicing. It seemed to set the social barometer at "fair," and to promise a spell of animation such as North Aston had been long wanting. And indeed personally for himself it was time that Major Harrowby was at home and at the head of his own affairs. Things had been going rather badly on the estate without him, and the need of a strong hand to keep agents straight and tenants up to the mark had been making itself somewhat disastrously felt during the last three or four years. Wherefore he had sold out; broken all his ties in India handsomely as he had broken them in London handsomely once before, when, mad with jealousy, he had fled like a thief in the night, burned his boats behind him, and, as he thought, obliterated every trace by which that loved and graceless woman could discover his real name or family holding; and now had come home prepared to do his duty to society and himself. That is, prepared to marry a nice girl of his own kind, keep the estate well in hand, and set an example of respectability and orthodoxy, family prayers and bold riding, according to the ideal of the English country gentleman.

But, above all, he must marry. And the wife provided for him by the eternal fitness of things was Adelaide Birkett.

Who else could be found to suit the part so perfectly? She was well-born, well-mannered, though not coarsely robust yet healthy in the sense of purity of blood; and she was decidedly pretty. So far

to the good of the Harrowby stock in the future. Neither was she too young; though by reason of her quiet country life her twenty-four years did not count more to her in wear and tear of feeling, and the doubtful moulding of experience, than if she had lived through one London season. She was a girl of acknowledged good sense; calm, equable; holding herself in the strictest leash of ladylike reserve, and governing all her emotions without trouble, patent or unconfessed. Hers was a character which would never floreate into irregular beauties to give her friends anxiety and crowd her life with embarrassing consequences. She despised sentiment and ridiculed enthusiasm; thought scepticism both wicked and disreputable—but at the same time fanaticism was silly, and not nearly so respectable as that quiet, easy-going religion which does nothing of which society would disapprove, but does not break its heart in trying to found the kingdom of God on earth.

All her relations with life and society would be blameless, orthodox, ladylike, and thoroughly English. As a wife she would preach submission in public and practise domination and the moral repression belonging to the superior being in private. As a mother she would take care to have experienced nurses and well-bred governesses who would look after the children properly, when she would wash her hands of further trouble and responsibility, save to teach them good manners at luncheon and self-control in their evening visit to the drawing-room for the "children's half-hour" before dinner. As the mistress of an establishment she would be strict; demanding perfect purity in the morals of her servants; not suffering waste, nor followers, nor kitchen amusements that she knew of, nor kitchen individuality anyhow. Her servants would be her serfs and she would assume to have bought them by food and wages in soul as well as body, in mind as well as muscle. She would give broken meat in moderation to the deserving poor, but she would let those who were not deserving do the best they could with want at home and inclemency abroad; and she would have called it fostering vice had she fed the wifeless mother when hungry or clothed the drunkard's children when naked. She would never be talked about for extremes or eccentricities of any kind; and the world would be forced to mention her with respect when it mentioned her at all—having indeed no desire to do otherwise. For she was of the kind dear to the heart of England; one of those who are called the salt of the earth, and who are assumed to keep society safe and pure. She was incredulous of science; contemptuous of superstition; impatient of new ideas; appreciating art but holding artists as inferior creatures like actors, acrobats, and newspaper-writers. She was loyal to the Queen and royal family, the nobility and Established Church, bracketing republicans with atheists and both with unpunished felons; as also classing immorality, the facts of physiology, and the details of disease in a group together, as things horrible and not to be spoken of before ladies. She was not slow to believe evil of her neighbours,

maintaining indeed that to be spoken of at all was proof sufficient of undesirable conduct; but she would never investigate a charge, preferring rather to accept it in its vile integrity than to soil her hands by attempting to unweave its dirty threads; hence she would be pitiless, repellent, but she would never make herself the focus of gossip. She was a human being if you will; a Christian in creed and name assuredly; but beyond and above all things she was a well-mannered well-conducted English lady, a person of spotless morals and exquisite propriety, in the presence of whom humanity must not be human, truth truthful, nor nature natural.

This was the wife for Edgar Harrowby as a country gentleman; the woman whom Mrs. Harrowby would have chosen out of thousands to be her daughter-in-law; whom his sisters would like; who would do credit to his name and position; and whom he himself would find as good for his purpose as any within the four seas.

For when Edgar married he would marry on social and rational grounds; he would not commit the mistake of fancying that he need love the woman as he had loved—some others. He would marry her, whoever she might be, because she would be of a good family and reasonable character, fairly handsome, unexceptionable in conduct, not tainted with hereditary disease nor disgraced by ragged relatives, having nothing to do with vice or poverty in the remotest link of her connections—a woman fit to be the keeper of his house, the bearer of his name, the mother of his children. But for love, passion, enthusiasm, sentiment—Edgar thought all such emotional impediments as these not only superfluous but oftentimes disastrous in the grave campaign of matrimony.

It was for this marriage that Adelaide had saved herself. She believed that any woman can marry any man if she only wills to do so; and from the day when she was seventeen, and they had had a picnic at Dunaston, she had made up her mind to marry Edgar Harrowby. When he came home for good, unmarried and unengaged, she knew that she should succeed; and Edgar knew it too. He knew it so well after he had been at home about a week that if anything could have turned him against the wife carved out for him by circumstance and fitness, it would have been the almost fatal character of that fitness, as if fortune had not left him a choice in the matter.

"And what do you think of Adelaide?" asked Mrs. Harrowby one day when her son said that he had been to the rectory. "You have seen her twice now, what is your impression of her?"

"She is prettier than ever; improved I should say all through," was his answer.

Mrs. Harrowby smiled.

"She is a girl I like," she said. "She is so sensible and has such nice feeling about things."

"Yes," answered Edgar; "she is thoroughly well-bred."

"We have seen a great deal of her of late years," Mrs. Harrowby

continued, angling dexterously. "She and the girls are fast friends, especially she and Josephine; though there is certainly some slight difference of age between them. But Adelaide prefers their society to that of any one about the neighbourhood. And I think that of itself shows such good taste and nice feeling!"

"So it does," said Edgar with dutiful assent, not exactly seeing for himself what constituted Adelaide's good taste and nice feeling in this preference for his dull and doleful sisters over the brighter companionship of the Fairbairns say, or any other of the local nymphs. To him those elderly maiden Harrowbys were rather bores than otherwise, but he was not displeased that Adelaide Birkett thought differently. If it "ever came to anything" it would be better that they satisfied her than that she should find them uncongenial.

"She is coming up to dinner this evening," Mrs. Harrowby went on to say; and Edgar smiled, pulled his moustaches, and looked half-puzzled if wholly pleased.

"She is a pretty girl," he said, with the imbecility of a man who ought to speak and who has nothing to say; also who has something that he does not wish to say.

"She is better than pretty, she is good," returned Mrs. Harrowby; and Edgar, not caring to discuss Adelaide on closer ground with his mother, strolled away into his private room, where he sat before the fire smoking, meditating on his life in the past and his prospects in the future, and wondering how he would like it when he had finally abjured the freedom of bachelorhood and had taken up with matrimony and squiredom for the remainder of his natural life.

Punctually at seven Adelaide Birkett appeared. This too was one of her minor virtues: she was exact; mind, person, habits, all were regulated with the nicest method, and she knew as little of hurry as of delay and as little of both as of passion.

"You are such a dear good punctual girl!" said Josephine affectionately—Josephine whose virtues had a few more loose ends and knots untied than had her friend's.

"It is so vulgar to be unpunctual," said Adelaide with her calm good-breeding. "It seems to me only another form of uncleanness and disorder."

"And Edgar is so punctual too!" cried Josephine by way of commentary.

Adelaide smiled, not broadly, not hilariously, only to the exact shade demanded by conversational sympathy.

"Then we shall agree in this," she said quietly.

"Oh I am sure you will agree, and in more than this;" Josephine returned, almost with enthusiasm.

Had she not been the willing nurse of this affair from the beginning?—if not the open confidante yet secretly holding the key to her younger friend's mind and actions? and was she not, like all the kindly disap-

pointed, intensely sympathetic with love matters whether wise or foolish, hopeful or hopeless?

"Who is it that you are sure will agree with Miss Adelaide? if any one indeed could be found to disagree with her!" asked Edgar, standing in the doorway.

Josephine laughed with the silliness of a weak woman "caught." She looked at Adelaide slyly. Adelaide turned her quiet face unflushed, unruffled, and neither laughed sillily nor looked slyly.

"She was praising me for punctuality; and then she said that you were punctual too," she explained cheerfully.

"We learn that in the army," said Edgar.

"But I have had to learn it without the army," she answered.

"Which shows that you have by the grace of nature what I have attained only by discipline and art," said Edgar gallantly.

Adelaide smiled. She did not disdain the compliment. On the contrary, she wished to impress it on Edgar that she accepted his praises because they were her due. She knew that the world takes us if not quite at our own valuation yet as being the character we assume to be. It all depends on our choice of a mask, and to what ideal self we dress. If we are clever and dress in keeping, without showing chinks or discrepancies, no one will find out that it is only a mask; and those of us are most successful in gaining the good will of our fellows who understand this principle the most clearly and act on it the most consistently.

The evening was a pleasant one for Adelaide, being an earnest of the future for which, if she had not worked hard, she had controlled much. Edgar sang solos to her accompaniment, and put in his rich barytone to her pure, if feeble, soprano; he played chess with her for an hour, and praised her play, as it deserved; naturally, not thinking it necessary to make love to his sisters, he paid her almost exclusive attention, and looked the admiration he felt. She really was a very pretty young woman, and she had unexceptionable manners; and having cut himself adrift from his ties and handsomely released himself from his obligations, he was not disposed to take much trouble in looking far afield for a wife when here was one ready made to his hand. Still, he was not so rash as to commit himself too soon. Fine play is never precipitate; and even the most lordly lover, if an English gentleman, thinks it seemly to pretend to woo the woman whom he means to take, and who he knows will yield.

And on her side Adelaide was too well-bred for the one part, and too wise for the other, to clutch prematurely at the prize she had willed should be hers. Her actions must be like her gestures, graceful, rhythmic, rather slow than hurried, and bearing the stamp of purpose and deliberation. When Edgar should make his offer, as she knew he would, she would ask for time to reflect and make up her mind. This would be doing the thing properly, and with due regard to her own dignity; for

no husband of hers should ever have cause to think that she held her marriage with him as a thing so undeniably advantageous there was no doubt of her acceptance from the first. Every woman must make herself difficult, thought Adelaide, if she wishes to be prized; even the woman who for seven years has fixed her eyes steadily on one point, and has determined that she will finally capture a certain man and land him as her lifelong possession.

Thus the evening passed, with a subtle undercurrent of concealed resolves flowing beneath its surface admiration that gave it a peculiar charm to the two people principally concerned—the one feeling that she had advanced her game by an important move, the other that the eternal fitness of things was making itself more and more evident, and that it was manifest to all his senses whom Providence has destined for his wife, and for what ultimate matrimonial end he had been shaped and spared.

A book of photographs was on the table.

"Are you here?" asked Edgar, lowering his bright blue eyes on Adelaide as she sat on a small chair at Mrs. Harrowby's feet, carrying daughtery incense to that withered shrine.

"Yes, I think so," she answered.

He turned the pages carefully, passing over his sisters in wide crinolines and spoon bonnets; his mother, photographed from an old picture, in a low dress and long dropping bands of hair, like a moulton's ears, about her face; Fred and himself, both as boys in Scotch suits, set stiffly against the table like dolls; with gradual improvement in art and style, till he came to a page where Adelaide's fair vignetted head of large size was placed side by side with another, also vignetted and also large.

"Ah! there you are; and what a capital likeness!" cried Edgar, with the joyous look and accent of one meeting an old friend, giving that gauge of interest which we all unconsciously give when we first see the photograph of a well-known face. He looked at the portrait long and critically. "Only not so pretty," he added gallantly. "Those fellows cannot catch the spirit; they give only the outside forms, and not always these correctly. Here is a striking face," he continued, pointing to Adelaide's companion-picture—a girl with masses of dark hair, dark eyes, large, mournful, heavily fringed with long lashes, and a grave, sad face, that seemed listening rather than looking. "Who is she? She looks foreign."

Adelaide glanced at the page, as if she did not know it by heart.

"That? Oh! that is only Leam Dundas," she said with the faintest, finest, flavour of scorn in her voice.

"Leam Dundas?" repeated Edgar; "the daughter of that awful woman?"

"Yes, and nearly as odd as the mother," answered Adelaide, still in the same cold manner and with the same accent of superior scorn.



"At least she used to be, you mean, dear, but she is more like other people now," said kindly Josephine, more just than politic.

Adelaide looked at her calmly indifferently.

"Yes, I suppose she is rather less savage than of old," was her reply; "but I do not see much of her."

"I do not remember to have ever seen her; she must have been a mere child when I was here last," said Edgar.

"She is nineteen now, I think," said Mrs. Harrowby.

"Not more?" repeated Adelaide. "I imagined she was one and twenty at the least. She looks so very much older than even this—five or six and twenty full;—dark people age so quickly."

"She seems to be superbly handsome," Edgar said, still looking at the portrait.

"For those who like that swarthy kind of beauty. For myself I do not; it always reminds me of negroes and Lascars."

Adelaide leaned forward, and made pretence to examine Leam's portrait with critical independence of judgment. She spoke as if this was the first time she had seen it, and her words the thought of the moment resulting.

"There is no negroid taint here," Edgar answered, gravely. "It is the face of a sibyl, of a tragedian."

"Do you think so? It is fine in outline certainly, but too monotonous to please me, and too lugubrious; and the funny part of it is, there is nothing in her. She looks like a sibyl, but she is the most profoundly stupid person you can imagine."

"Not now, Addy; she has wakened up a good deal," again interposed Josephine with her love of justice and want of tact.

"But do you not see the mother in her, Josephine? I do, painfully; and the mother was such a horror! Leam is just like her. She will grow her exact counterpart."

"A bad model enough," said Edgar; "but this face is not bad. It has more in it than poor old Pepita's. How fat she was!"

"So will Leam be when she is as old," said Adelaide, quietly. "And do you think these dark people ever look clean? I don't."

"That is a drawback certainly," laughed Edgar, running through the remainder of the book.

But he turned back again to the page which held Leam and Adelaide side by side, and he spoke of the latter while he looked at the former. The face of Leam Dundas, mournful, passionate, concentrated as it was, had struck his imagination; struck it as none other had done since the time when he had met that grand and graceful woman wandering, lost in a fog, in St. James's Park, and had protected from possible annoyance till he had landed her in St. John's Wood. He was glad that Leam Dundas lived in North Aston, and that he should see her without trouble or overt action; and as he handed Adelaide into her carriage he noticed for the first time that her blue eyes were not quite even, that her

flaxen hair had not quite enough colour, and that her face, if pure and fair, was slightly insipid.

"Poor, dear Adelaide," he said, when he returned to the drawing-room, "how nice she is, but how tart she was about this Leam Dundas of yours! Looks like jealousy; and very likely is. All you women are so horribly jealous."

"Not all of us," said Maria, hastily.

"And I do not think that Adelaide is," said Josephine. "She has no cause; for though Leam is certainly very lovely, and seems to have improved immensely through being at school, still she and Addy do not come into collision any way, and I do not see why she should be jealous."

"Perhaps Edgar admired her photograph too much," said Fanny, who was the stupid one of the three, but on occasions made the shrewdest remarks.

Edgar laughed, not displeasedly. "That would be paying me too high a compliment," he said.

Whereat his three sisters echoed "Compliment!" in various tones of deprecation, and Josephine added a meaning little laugh for her own share, for which Edgar gave her a kiss, and said in a bantering kind of voice, "Now, Joseph! mind what you are about!"

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ON THE MOOR.

It was a grey and gusty day in November, with heavy masses of low-lying clouds rolling tumultuously overhead, and a general look of damp and decay about the fields and banks; one of those melancholy days of the late autumn which make one long for the more varied circumstances of confessed winter, when the deep blue shadows in the crisp snow suggest the glory of southern skies, and the sparkle of the sun on the delicate tracery of the frosted branches has a mimicry of life, such as we imagine strange elves and fairies might create.

There was no point of colour in the landscape save the brown foliage of the shivering beech-trees, a few coarse splashes of yellow weeds, and here and there a trail of dying crimson leaves threading the barren hedgerows. Everything was sombre, lifeless, mournful, and even Edgar Harrowby, though by no means sentimentally impressionable to outward conditions, felt, as he rode through the deserted lanes and looked abroad over the stagnant country, that life on the off hunt days was but a slow kind of thing at North Aston, and that any incident which should break the dead monotony of the scene would be welcome.

He had been thinking a great deal of Adelaide for the last four or five days; since she had dined at the Hill; and making up his mind to take the final plunge before long. He was not in love with her, but she

suited, as has been said; and that was as good as love to Edgar, who had now to take up his squirehood and country gentleman's respectability, after having had his share of a young man's "fling" in rather larger proportion than falls to the lot of most. All the same he wished that her face had more expression and that her eyes were perfectly straight; and he wanted to see Leam Dundas.

He had made a long round to-day, and was turning now homeward, when, as he had almost crossed the moor, athwart which his road led, he saw standing on a little hillock, away from the main track, the slight figure of a woman sharply defined against the sky. She was alone, doing nothing, not seeming to be looking at anything; just standing there on the hillock, facing the north-west, as if for pleasure in the rough freshness of the breeze.

The wind blew back her dress and showed her girlish form, supple, flexible, graceful, fashioned like some nymph of olden time. From her small feet, arched and narrow, gripping the ground like feet of steel, to the slender throat on which her head was set with so much grace of line yet with no sense of overweighting in its tender curves, an expression of nervous energy underlying her fragile liteness of form, a look of strength, not muscular nor the strength of bulk or weight, but the strength of fibre, will, tenacity, seemed to mark her out as something different from the herd.

Edgar scarcely gave this vague impression words in his own mind, but he was conscious of a new revelation of womanhood, and he scented an adventure in this solitary figure facing the north-west wind on the lonely moor.

Her very dress, too, had a character of its own in harmony with the rest—black all through, save for the scarlet feather in her hat which burnt like a flame against the grey background of the sky; and her whole attitude had something of defiance in its profound stillness, while standing so boldly against the strong blasts that swept across the heights, which caught his imagination, at that moment ready to be inflamed. All things depend on times and moods, and Edgar's mood at this moment of first seeing Leam Dundas was favourable for the reception of new impressions.

For, of course, it was Leam; Leam, who, since her return from school, alone and without companionship, was feverish often, and often impelled to escape into the open country from something that oppressed her down in the valley too painfully to be borne. She had never been a confidential nor an expansive schoolfellow; not even an affectionate one as girls count affection, seeing that she neither kissed nor cried, neither quarrelled nor made up, neither stood as a model of fidelity nor changed her girl-lovers in anticipation of future inconstancies—writing a love-letter to Ada to-day and a copy of verses to Ethel to-morrow—but had kept with all the same quiet gravity and gentle reticence which seemed

to watch rather than share, and to be more careful not to offend than solicitous to win.

All the same she missed her former comrades now that she had lost them; but most of all, she missed the wholesome occupation and mental employment of her studies. Left as she was to herself, thoughts and memories were gathering up from the background where they had lain dormant if extant all these years, and through her solitude were getting a vitality which made her stand still in a kind of breathless agony, wondering where they would lead her and in what they would end. At times such a burning sense of sin would flash over her that she felt as if she must confess that hideous fact of her girlish past. It seemed so shameful that she should be living there among the rest, a criminal with the innocent, and not tell them what she was. Then the instinct of self-preservation would carry it over her conscience, and she would press back her thoughts and go out, as to-day, to cool her feverish blood, and grow calm to bear and strong to hold the heavy burden which she had fashioned by her own mad deed, and laid for life on her own hands.

If only the ladies had not insisted so strongly on mamma's personality in heaven!—if only they had not lighted up her imagination, her loyalty, by this tremendous torch of faith and love! How bitterly she regretted the childish fanaticism which had made her imagine herself the providence of that beloved memory, the avenger of those shadowy wrongs! Oh, if she could undo the past, and call Madame back to life! She would kiss her now, and even call her mamma if it would please her and papa! So she stood on the hillock facing the north-west, thinking these things, and regretting in vain.

As Edgar came riding by his large black hound dashed off to Leam and barked furiously, all four paws planted on the ground as if preparing for a spring. The beast had probably no malice, and might have meant it merely as his method of saying, "Who are you?" but he looked formidable, and Leam started back and cried, "Down, dog! go away!" in a voice half angry and half afraid.

Then Edgar saw the face and knew who she was.

He rode across the turf, calling off his dog, and came up to her. It was an opportunity, and Edgar Harrowby was a man who knew how to take advantage of opportunities. It was in his creed to thank Providence for favourable chances by making the most of them, and this was a chance of which it would be manifestly ungrateful not to make the most. It was far more picturesque to meet her for the first time, as now, on the wild moor on a gusty grey November day, than in the gloomy old drawing-room at the Hill. It gave a flavour of romance and the forbidden which was not without its value in the beginning of an acquaintance with such a face as Leam's. Nevertheless, in spite of the romance that hung about the circumstance, his first words were commonplace enough.

"I hope my dog has not alarmed you?" he said, lifting his hat.

Leam looked at him with those wonderful eyes of hers that seemed somehow to look through him. She, standing on her hillock, was slightly higher than Edgar sitting on his horse; and her head was bent as she looked down on him, giving her attitude and gesture something of a dignified assumption of superiority, more like the Leam of the past than of the present.

"No, I was not alarmed," she said. "But I do not like to be barked at," she added, an echo of the old childish sense of injury from circumstance that was so quaint and pretty in her half-complaining voice.

"I suppose not; how should you?" answered Edgar with sympathetic energy. "Rover is a good old fellow, but he has the troublesome trick of giving tongue unnecessarily. He would not have hurt you, but I should be very sorry to think he had frightened you. To heel, sir!" angrily.

"No, he did not frighten me," repeated Leam.

Never loquacious, there was something about this man's face and manner, his masterful spirit underneath his courteous bearing, his look of masculine power and domination, his admiring eyes that fixed themselves on her so unflinchingly, not with insolence but as if he had the prescriptive right of manhood to look at her, only a woman, as he chose, he commanding and she obeying, that quelled and silenced her even beyond her wont. He was the first gentleman of noteworthy appearance who had ever spoken to her; not counting Alick, nor the masters who had taught her at school, nor Mr. Birkett, nor Mr. Fairbairn, as gentlemen of noteworthy appearance; and the first of all things has a special influence over young minds.

"You are brave to walk so far alone; you ought to have a dog like Rover to protect you," Edgar said, still looking at her with those unflinching eyes which oppressed her even when she did not see them.

"I am not brave, and I do not care for dogs. Besides, I do not often walk so far as this:—but I felt the valley stifling to-day," answered Leam, in her matter-of-fact categorical way.

"All the same you ought to have protection," Edgar said authoritatively, and Leam did not reply.

She only looked at him earnestly, wondering against what she should be protected, having abandoned by this time her belief in banditti and wild beasts.

If his eyes oppressed her hers half-embarrassed him. There was such a strange mixture of intensity and innocence in them—he scarcely knew how to meet them.

"It is absurd to pretend that we do not know each other," then said Edgar after a short pause, smiling; and his smile was very sweet and pleasant. "You are Miss Dundas, I am Edgar Harrowby."

"Yes, I know," Leam answered.

"How is that?" he asked. "*I knew you from your photograph—once seen not to be forgotten again,*" gallantly; "but how should you know me?"

Leam raised her eyes from the ground where she had cast them. Those slow full looks, intense, tragic, fixed, had a startling effect of which she was wholly unconscious. Edgar felt his own grow dark and tender as he met hers. If the soul and mind within only answered to the mask without, what queen or goddess could surpass this half-breed Spanish girl, this country-born, unnoted, but glorious Leam Dundas? he thought.

"And I knew you from yours," she answered.

"An honour beyond my deserts," said Edgar.

Not that he thought the notice of a girl, even with such a face as this, beyond his deserts. Indeed if a queen or a goddess had condescended to him it would not have been a grace beyond his merits; but it sounded pretty to say so, and served to make talk as well as anything else. And to make talk was the main business on hand at this present moment.

"Why an honour?" asked Leam, ignorant of the elements of flirting.

Edgar smiled again; and this time his smile without words troubled her. It seemed the assertion of superior intelligence, contemptuous, if half pitiful of her ignorance. Once so serenely convinced of her superiority, Leam was now as suspicious of her shortcomings, and was soon abashed.

Edgar did not see that he had troubled her. Masterful and masculine to an eminent degree, the timid doubts and fears of a young girl were things he could not recognise. He had no point in his own nature with which they came in contact, so that he should sympathise with them. He knew the whole fence and foil of coquetry, the signs of silent flattery, the sweet language of womanly self-conscious love, whether wooing or being won; but the fluttering misgivings of youth and absolute inexperience were dark to him. All of which he felt conscious was that here was something deliciously fresh and original, and that Leam was more beautiful to look at than Adelaide, and a great deal more interesting to talk to.

"If you will allow me, now that I have had the pleasure of meeting you, I will see you safe for at least part of your way home," he said, passing by her naïve query "Why an honour?" as a thing to be answered only by that smile of superior wisdom.

Flinging himself from his horse he took the bridle in his hand, and turned towards home, looking to the girl to accompany him. Leam felt that she could not refuse his escort offered as so much a matter of course. Why should she? It was very pleasant to have some one to walk with; some one not her father, with whom she still felt shy if not now absolutely estranged; nor yet Alick, in whose pale face she was always reading the past, and who, though he was so good and kind and tender, was her master and held her in his hand. This handsome courteous gentleman was different from either, and she liked his society and superior ways. And as he began now to talk to her of things not trenching on, nor admitting of, flirtation—chiefly of the places he had visited: India,



Egypt, Italy, Spain—she was not so much abashed by his unflinching looks and masterful manner.

When he entered on Spain and his recollections of what he had seen there, the girl's heart throbbed, and her pale face grew whiter still with that passionate thrill that stirred her. The old blood was in her veins yet, and though modified, and in some sense transformed, she was still Pepita's daughter and the child of Andalusia. And here was truth; not like that poor wretched Madame's talk, which even she had found out to be false and only making believe to know what she did not know. Spain was the name of power with Leam, as it had been with her mother, and she lifted her face, white with its passionate desires, listening as if entranced to all that Edgar said.

It was a good opening, and the handsome soldier-squire congratulated himself on his lucky hit and serviceable memory. Presently he touched on Andalusia, and Leam, who hitherto had been listening without comment, now broke in eagerly.

"That is my own country!" she cried. "Mamma came from Andalusia; beautiful Andalusia! Ah! how I should like to go there!"

"Perhaps you will some day," Edgar answered, a little significantly.

Had she been more instructed in the kind of thing he meant, she would have seen that he wished to convey the idea of a love-journey made with him.

She shook her head, and her eyes grew moist and dewy.

"Not now," she said, mournfully. "Poor mamma has gone, and there is no one now to take me."

"I will make up a party some day, and you shall be one of us," said Edgar.

She brightened all over. "Ah! that would be delightful!" she cried, taking him seriously. "When do you think we shall go?"

"I will talk about it," Edgar answered, though smiling again—Leam wished he would not smile so often—a little aghast at her literalness, and saying to himself in warning that he must be careful of what he said to Leam Dundas. It was evident that she did not understand either badinage or a joke. But her very earnestness pleased him for all its oddity. It was so unlike the superficiality and levity of the modern girl—that hateful Girl of the Period, in whose existence he believed, and of whose influence he stood in almost superstitious awe. He liked that grave intense way of hers, which was neither puritanical nor stolid, but, on the contrary, full of unspoken passion, rich in latent concentrated power.

"They are very beautiful, are they not?" Leam asked suddenly.

"What? who?" was Edgar's answer.

"The Andalusian women; and the men," returned Leam.

"The men are fine-looking fellows enough," answered Edgar, carelessly; "a little too brutal for my taste, but well-grown men for all that. But I have seen prettier women out of Spain than in it."

"Mamma used to say they were so beautiful—the most beautiful of all the women in the world; and the best." Leam said this with a disappointed air and in her old injured accent.

Edgar laughed softly.

"The prettiest Andalusian woman I have ever seen has an English father," he answered, with a sudden flush on his handsome face as he bent it a little nearer to hers.

"How odd!" said Leam. "An English father? That is like me!"

Edgar looked at her, to read how much of this was real ingenuousness, how much affected simplicity. He saw only a candid inquiring face with a faint shade of surprise in its quiet earnestness, unquestionably not affected.

"Just so," he answered. "Exactly like you."

His voice and manner made Leam blush uncomfortably. She was conscious of something disturbing, without knowing what it was. She first looked up into his face with the same expression of inquiry as before; then down to the earth perplexedly; when suddenly the truth came upon her—he meant herself—she was the prettiest Andalusian he had ever seen!

She was intensely humiliated at her discovery. Not one of those girls who study every feature, every gesture, every point, till there is not a square inch of their personality of which they are not painfully conscious, Leam had never taken herself into artistic consideration at all. She had been proud of her Spanish blood, of her mantilla, her high comb, and her fan; but of herself as a woman among women she knew nothing, nor whether she was plain or pretty. Indeed, had she had to say offhand which, she would have answered plain. The revelation which comes sooner or later to all women of the charms they possess had not yet come to her, and Edgar's words, making the first puncture in her ignorance, pained her more by the shock which they gave her self-consciousness than they pleased her by their flattery.

She said no more, but walked by his side with her head held very high and slightly turned away. She was sorry that he had offended her. They had been getting on together so well until he had said this foolish thing; and now they were like friends who had quarrelled. She was quite sorry that he had been so foolish as to offend her; but she must not forgive him—at least not just yet. It was very wrong of him to tell her that she was prettier than the true children of the soil; and she resented the slight to Spain and her mother, as well as the wrong done to herself, by saying that which was not true. So she walked with her little head held high, and Edgar could get nothing more out of her. When Leam was offended coaxings to make her forget were of no avail. She had to wear through an impression by herself, and it was useless to try for a premature pardon.

Edgar saw that he had overshot the mark, and that his best policy now was absence; wherefore, after a few moments' silence, he remounted his horse, looking penitent, handsome, full of admiration, and downcast.

"I hope we shall soon see you at the Hill, Miss Dundas," he said, holding her hand in his for his farewell a little longer than was quite necessary for good breeding or even cordiality.

"I very seldom go to the Hill," answered Leam, looking past his head.

"But you will come, and soon?" fervently.

"Perhaps—I do not know," answered Leam, still looking past his head, and embarrassed to a most uncomfortable extent.

"Thank you," he said, as if he had been thanking her for the grace of his life; and with a long look, lifting his hat again, he rode off; just escaping by a few hundred yards the danger of being met, walking with Leam, by his sisters and Adelaide Birkett. They were all driving together in the phaeton, and the sisters were making much of their young friend.

At that moment Edgar preferred to be met alone, and not walking with Leam.

He did not stop the carriage; simply nodded to them all with familiar kindness, as a group of relatives not demanding extra courtesy, flinging a few words behind him as he rode on smiling. Nor did they in their turn stop for Leam, whom they met soon after walking slowly along the road; but Josephine said, as they passed, how pretty Leam looked to-day, and how much softer her face was than it used to be; and Maria—even Maria—agreed with kindly Joseph, and was quite eulogistic on the object of her old disdain. Adelaide sat silent, and did not join in their encomiums.

It would have been a nice point to ascertain if the Misses Harrowby would have praised the girl's beauty as they did, had they known that she had grown soft and dewy-eyed by talking of Spain with their brother Edgar; though she had hardened a little afterwards, when he told her that she was the prettiest Andalusian he had ever seen.

During the dinner at the Hill, where Adelaide was one of the family party, Edgar mentioned casually how that he had met Miss Dundas on the moor, and had had to speak to her because of Rover's misbehaviour.

"Yes? and what do you think of her?" asked Mrs. Harrowby with a sharp glance.

"I scarcely know; I have hardly seen her as yet," he answered.

"Did she say or do anything very extraordinary to-day?" asked Adelaide with an air of contemptuous curiosity that seemed to him insufferably insolent.

"No, nothing. Is she in the habit of saying or doing extraordinary things?" he answered back, arching his eyebrows and speaking in a well-affected tone of sincere inquiry.

"At times she is more like a maniac than a sane person," said Adelaide, breaking her bread with deliberation. "What can you expect from such a parentage and education as hers?"

Edgar looked down, and smiled satirically.

"Poor Pepita's sins lie heavy on your mind," he answered.

"Yes, I believe in race," was her reply.

"Mother," then said Edgar after a short silence, "why do you not have Miss Dundas to dine here with Adelaide? It would be more amusing to her, for it must be dull"—turning to their guest, and speaking amiably, considerately—"I am afraid very dull, to be so often quite alone with us."

He did not add what he thought, that it was almost indelicate in her to be here so often. He was out of humour with her to-day.

"She is such an uncertain girl, we never know how she may be. I had her to stay here once, and I do not want to repeat the experiment," was Mrs. Harrowby's answer.

"But, mamma, that was before she went to school, when she was quite a child. She is so much improved now," pleaded Josephine.

"Good little soul!" said Edgar under his breath. "Wine, Joseph?" aloud, as his recognition of her good offices.

"And I like coming alone best, thanks," said Adelaide with unruffled calmness. "Leam has never been my friend; indeed I do not like her, and you all"—to the sisters, with a gracious smile and prettily—"have always been my favourite companions."

"Still she is very lonely, and it would be kind. Besides, she is good to look at," said Edgar.

"Do you think so?" said Mrs. Harrowby with crisp lips and ill-concealed displeasure.

"Do I think so, mother? I should have no eyes else. She is superb. I have never seen such a face. She is the most beautiful creature I have ever known, of any nation."

Adelaide's delicate pink cheeks turned pale, and then they flushed a brilliant rose as she laid down her spoon and left her jelly untasted.

There were no trials of skill at chess, no duets, no solos, this evening. After dinner Edgar went to his own room, and sat there smoking. He felt revolted at the idea of spending two or three hours with what he irreverently called "a lot of dull women," and preferred his own thoughts to their talk. He sauntered into the drawing-room about ten minutes before Adelaide had to leave, apologising for his absence on the man's easy plea of "business;" saying he was sorry to have missed her charming society and he hoped they should see her there soon again; and so on; all in the proper voice and manner, but with a certain ring of insincerity in the tones which Adelaide detected, if the others did not. But she accepted his excuses with the most admirable tact, smiling to the sisters as she said, "Oh, we have been very happy, Josephine, have we not? though," with a nice admission of Edgar's claims, not too broadly stated nor too warmly allowed, "of course it would have been very pleasant if you could have come in too."

"It has been my loss," said Edgar.

She smiled "yes," by eyes, lips, and turn of her graceful head. In

speech she answered, "Of that, of course you are the best judge for yourself; but none of us here feel as some girls do, lost without gentlemen to amuse them. We can get on very well by ourselves. Cannot we, Joseph?"

And Josephine said, gallantly, "Yes;" but her heart was more rueful than her voice, and she thought that some gentlemen were very nice, and that Sebastian Dundas especially made the dull time pass pleasantly.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE CHILD FINA.

Nothing surprised the North Astonians more than what it was the fashion to call "the admirable manner in which Leam behaved to the child Fina." If the world which praised her had known all the compelling circumstances, would it have called her admirable then? Yet beyond those natural promptings of remorse which forced her to do the best she could for the child whom her fatal crime had rendered motherless, Leam did honestly behave well; if this means doing irksome things without complaint, and sacrificing self to a sense of right. And this was all the more praiseworthy in that sympathy of nature between these two young creatures there was none, and the girl's maternal instinct was not of that universal kind which makes all children pleasant, whatever they may be. Hence, she did nobly when she did her duty with the uncompromising exactness characteristic of her; but it was only duty, it was not love.

How should it be love? Her tenacity and reserve were ill matched by Fina's native inconstancy of purpose and childish incontinence of speech; her pride of race resented her father's adoption of a stranger into the penetralia of the family, and to share the name she had inherited from her mother with the daughter of that mother's rival seemed to her a wrong done to both the living and the dead. Naturally taciturn, unjoyful, and ever oppressed by that brooding consciousness of guilt which was like a cloud over her memory, formless, vague, but never lifting, Fina's changeful temper and tumultuous vivacity were intensely wearisome to her. Nevertheless, she was forbearing if not loving; and the people said rightly when they said she was admirable.

Her grave patience with the little one did more to open her father's heart to her than did even her own wonderful beauty which gratified his paternal pride of authorship, or than her efforts after docility to himself—efforts that would have been creditable to anyone, and that with her were heroic. For Mr. Dundas, being of those clinging, clasping natures which must love some one, had taken poor Madame's child into his affections in the wholesale manner so emphatically his own, now in these first days of

his new paternity seeming to live only for the little Fina, and never happy but when he had her with him. It was the first time that he felt he had had a child of his own; and he gave her the love which would have been Leam's had Pepita been less of a savage than she was, and more discreet in the matter of doll-dressing.

The little round, fair-haired creature, with her picturesque Gainsborough head and rose-red lips; pretty, pleasant, facile; easily amused if easily made cross; divertible from her purpose if she was but coaxed and caressed, and if the substitute offered was to her liking; without tenacity, fluid, floating on the surface of things and born of their froth; loving only those who ministered to her pleasure and were in sight; forgetting yesterday's joys as though they had never been, and her dearest so soon as they were absent; a child deliciously caressing because sensual by temperament and instinctively diplomatic; with no latent greatness to be developed as time went on and the flower set into the fruit; epitomising the characteristics of the class of which her mother had been a typical example—she was the pleasantest thing of his life to a man who cared mainly to be amused, and who liked with a woman's liking to be loved.

The strong love of children inherent in him, which had never been satisfied till now, seemed now to have gathered tenfold strength, and the love of the man who had never cared for his own for this, his little daughter by adoption, was almost a passion. If Leam could have been jealous where she did not love, she would have been jealous of her father and Fina. But she was not. On the contrary, it seemed to soften some of the bitterness of her self-reproach, and she was glad that Madame's motherless child was not deserted, but had found a substitute for the protection which she had taken from her; for Leam, criminal, was not ignoble.

A few days after the meeting on the moor between Leam and Edgar Mr. Dundas drove to the Hill, carrying Fina with him. Leam had a fit of shyness and refused to go; thus Sebastian had the child to himself, and was not sorry to be without his elder and less congenial daughter. He owned to himself that she was good, very good, indeed, and a great deal better than he ever expected she would be; yet for all that, with her more than Oriental gravity and reserve, and that look of tragedy haunting her face, she was not an amusing companion, and the little one was.

Mr. Dundas had begun to take up his old habits again with the Harrowbys. He found the patient constancy of his friend Josephine not a disagreeable salve for a wounded heart and broken life; albeit poor dear Joseph was getting stout and matronly, and took off the keen edge of courtship by a willingness too manifest for wisdom. Sebastian liked to be loved, but he did not like to be bored by being made overmuch love to. The things are different; and most men resent the latter how much soever they desire the former.



Edgar was in the drawing-room when Mr. Dundas was announced. He was booted and spurred, waiting for his horse to be brought round.

"What a pretty little girl!" he said after a time. True to his type, he was fond of children and animals, and children and animals liked him. "Come and speak to me," he continued, holding out his hand to Fina. "Whose child is she?" vaguely, to the company in general.

"Mine," said Mr. Dundas emphatically. "My youngest daughter, Fina Dundas."

Edgar knew what he meant. He had often heard the story from his sisters; and since his return home he had had Adelaide Birkett's comments thereon. He looked then with even more interest on the pretty little creature in dark-blue velvet and swansdown, unconscious, careless, happy, as the child of a mystery and a tragedy in one.

"Ah!" he said sympathetically, "Come to me, little one," again, coaxingly.

Fina, with her finger in her mouth, went up to him half-shyly, half-boldly, and wholly prettily. She let him take her on his knee and kiss her without remonstrance. She was of the kind to like being taken on knees and kissed; especially by gentlemen who were strong and matronly women who were soft; and she soon made friends. Not many minutes elapsed before, kneeling upon his knees, she was stroking his tawny beard and plaiting it in threes, pulling his long moustache, playing with his watch-guard, and laughing in his face with the pretty audacity of six.

"What a dear little puss!" cried Edgar, caressing her. "Very like you, Joseph, I should think, when you were her age, judging by your picture. Is she not, mother?"

"They say so, but I do not see it," answered Mrs. Harrowby primly.

She did not like to hear about this resemblance. There was something in it that annoyed her intensely, she scarcely knew why, and the more so because it was true.

"Poor Madame used to say so; she saw it from the first, when Fina was quite a little baby," said Josephine in a low voice.

She was kneeling by her brother's side, caressing Fina. She always made love to the little girl. It was one of her methods of making love to the father.

"Is she like her mother?" asked Edgar in the same low tones, looking at the child critically.

"A little," answered Josephine; "not much. It is odd, is it not, that she should be more like me?"

Just then Fina laid her fresh sweet lips against Edgar's, and he kissed her with a strange thrill of tenderness.

"Why, Edgar, I never saw you take so to a child before;" cried Mrs. Harrowby not quite pleasantly; and on Sebastian adding with his nervous little laugh, which meant the thing it assumed only to play at; "I declare I shall be quite jealous, Edgar, if you make love to my little

girl like this!" Edgar, who had the Englishman's dislike to observation, save when he offered himself for personal admiration, laughed too, and put Fina away.

But the child had taken a fancy to him, and could scarcely be induced to leave him. She clung to his hand still, and went reluctantly when her stepfather called her. It was a very little matter, but men being weak in certain directions, it delighted Edgar and annoyed Sebastian beyond measure.

"I hope your elder daughter is well," then said Edgar, emphasising the adjective, the vision of Leam as he first saw her, breasting the wind, filling his eyes with a strange light.

"Leam? Quite well, thanks. But how do you know anything about her?" was Sebastian's reply.

"I met her yesterday on the moor, and Rover introduced us," answered Edgar, laughing.

"How close she is!" said her father fretfully. "She never told me a word about it."

"Perhaps she thought the incident too trifling," suggested Edgar, a little chagrined.

"Oh no, not at all! In a place like North Aston the least thing counts as an adventure; and meeting for the first time one of the neighbours is not an incident to be forgotten as if it were of no more value than meeting a flock of sheep."

Mr. Dundas spoke peevishly. To a man who liked to be amused, and who lived on crumbs, this reserved companionship was disappointing and tiresome.

"Leam is at home making music," said Fina disdainfully. She had caught the displeased accent of her adopted father, and echoed it.

"Does she make much music?" asked Edgar with his hand under her chin, turning up her face.

The child shrugged her little shoulders.

"She makes a noise," she said; and those who heard her laughed.

"That is not a very polite way of putting it," said Edgar a little gravely.

"No," said Josephine.

"You should speak nicely of your sister, my little one," put in Sebastian.

Fina looked up into his face reproachfully.

"You called it a noise yourself, papa," she said, pouting. "You made her leave off yesterday as soon as you came in, because you said she made your head ache with her noise, and set your teeth—something, I don't know what."

"Did I, dear?" he repeated carelessly. "Well, we need not discuss the subject. I daresay it amuses her to make music, as you call it, and so we need say no more about it."

"But you did say it was a noise," persisted Fina, climbing on to his

knees and putting her arms round his neck. "And I think it a noise too!"

"Poor Leam's music cannot be very first-rate," remarked Maria, who was a proficient and played almost as well as a "professional." "Four years ago she did not know her notes, and four years' practice cannot be expected to make a perfect pianiste."

"But a person may play very sweetly and yet not be what you call perfect," said Edgar.

"Do you think so?" Maria answered with a frosty smile. "I do not." Of what use to have toiled for thirty years early and late at scales and thorough-bass if a stupid girl like Leam could be allowed to play sweetly after four years' desultory practice? "Adelaide Birkett, if you will, plays well," she added; "but Leam, poor child, how should she?"

"I hope I shall have an opportunity of judging for myself," said Edgar with his company manner. "When will you come and dine here, Dundas? to-morrow? You and your elder daughter—we shall be very glad to see you."

He looked to his mother. Mrs. Harrowby had drawn her lips tight, and wore an injured air doing its best to be resigned. This was Edgar's first essay in domestic mastership, and it pained her, not unnaturally.

"Thanks," said Sebastian. "Willingly, if—" looking to Mrs. Harrowby.

"I have no engagement, and Edgar is master now," said that lady.

"And mind that Leam comes too," said Josephine, sharing her favourite brother's action, by design.

"And me!" cried Fina.

Whereat they all laughed, which made Fina cry; to be consoled only by some sweetmeats found by Josephine in her work-basket.

It was agreed, then, that the next day Leam and her father should dine at the Hill.

"Only ourselves," Edgar said, wanting the excuse of her "being the only lady" to devote himself to Leam. It was strange that he should be so anxious to see her nearer, and in company with his sisters and mother; for after all, why should he? What was she to him, either near or afar-off, alone or in the inner circle of his family?

But when the next day came Mr. Dundas appeared alone. Leam had been taken with a fit of shyness, pride—who shall say?—and refused to accept her share of the invitation. Her father made the stereotyped excuse of "headache;" but heads ache too opportunely to be always real, and Leam's to-night was set down to the fancy side of the account, and not believed in by the hearers any more than by the bearer.

Edgar raged against her in his heart, and decided that she was not worth a second thought; while the ladies said in an undertone from each to each "How rude!" Maria adding "How like Leam!" the chain of

condemnation receiving no break till it came to Josephine, whose patient soul refrained from wrath and gave as her link ; " Poor Leam ; perhaps she is shy, or has really a headache ! "

In spite of his decision that she was not worth a second thought, the impression which Leam had made on Edgar deepened with his disappointment, and he became restless and unpleasant in his temper, casting about for means whereby he might see her again. He cast about in vain. This fit of shyness, pride, reluctance, who knows what ? continued with Leam for many days after this. If she went out at all she went where she knew she should not be met ; and if Edgar called at Ford House she was not to be found. She mainly devoted herself to Fina and some books lent her by Alick, and kept the house with strange persistency. Perhaps this was because the weather was bad, for Leam, who could bear wind and frost and noonday sun, could not bear wet. When it rained she shut herself up in her own room, and pitied herself for the ungenial skies as she had pitied herself for some other things before now.

Sitting thus reading, one miserably dark, cold, misty day, the child Fina came in to her with her lessons, which she repeated well. They were very small and insignificant little lessons, for Leam had a fellow-feeling for the troubles of ignorance, and laid but a light hand on the frothy mind inside that curly head. When they were finished the little one said coaxingly, " Now play with me, Leam ! you never play with me ! "

" What can I do, Fina ? " poor Leam replied.

She had never learnt to play when she was a child ; she had never built towers and towns, made railway trains and coaches with the sofa and chairs ; played at giants through the dark passages and screamed when she was caught. She had only sat still when mamma was asleep ; or when she was awake played on the zambomba, or listened to her when she told her of the things of Spain, and made up stories with her dolls that were less edifying than those of Mother Bunch. She could scarcely, however, unpack that old box full of waxen puppets, with the one dressed in scarlet and black, with fishbone horns and a worsted tail and a queer clumped kind of foot made of folds of leather, cleft in the middle, that used to go by the name of " El señor Papa. " What could she do ?

" Shall I tell you a story ? " she then said in a mild fit of desperation ; for story-telling was as little in her way as anything else.

" Yes ! yes ! tell me a story ! "

Fina clapped her chubby hands together and climbed up into Leam's lap.

" What shall it be about—bears, or tigers, or what ? " asked Leam dutifully.

" Tell me about mamma, my own mamma, not Aunt Birkett, " said Fina.

Leam shuddered from head to foot. This was the first time the little

girl had mentioned her mother's name to her. Indeed she did not know that she had ever heard of her at all—ever known that she had had a mother; but the servants had talked, and the child's curiosity was aroused. The dead mother is as much a matter of wondering inquiry as the angels and the stars; and Fina's imagination was beginning to bestir itself on the mysteries of childish life.

"I have nothing to tell you about her," said Leam, controlling herself though she still shivered.

"Yes you have, everything," insisted Fina. "Was mamma pretty?" playing with a corner of her sister's ribbon.

"People said so," answered Leam.

"As pretty as Cousin Addy?" she asked.

"About," said Leam, who thought neither supreme.

"Prettier than you?"

"I don't know—how can I tell?" she answered a little impatiently.

The mother's blood that ran in her, the mother's mould in which she had been formed, forbid her to put herself below Madame in anything; but as she was neither vain nor conscious she found Fina's question difficult to answer.

"Oh!" cried Fina, in a tone of disappointment. "Then she could not have been very pretty."

"I daresay she was, but I do not know," returned Leam.

"And she died?" continued Fina, yawning in a childishly indifferent manner.

"Yes; she died."

"Why? Who killed her? Did papa?" asked Fina.

Leam's face was very white.

"No, not papa."

"Did God?"

"I cannot tell you, Fina," said Leam, to whom falsehoods were abhorrent and the truth impossible.

"Did you?" persisted Fina, with childish obstinacy.

"Now go," said Leam, putting her off her lap and rising from her chair in strange disorder. "You are troublesome and ask too many questions."

Fina began to cry loudly, and Mr. Dundas, from his library below, heard her. He came upstairs with his fussy, restless kindness, and opened the door of the room where his two daughters, of nature and by adoption, were standing, hostile and disturbed.

"Hey day, what's all this about?" he cried. "What's the matter, my little Fina? what are you crying for? Tut, tut—you should not cry like this, darling—and Leam," severely, "you should really keep the child better amused and happy! She is as good as gold with me—with you there is always something wrong."

Fina ran into his arms, sobbing.

"Leam is cross," she said. "She will not tell me who killed mamma!"

The man's ruddy face, reddened and roughened with travel, grew white and pitiful.

"God took her away, my darling!" he said with a sob. "She was too good for me, and he took her to live with the angels in heaven."

"And Leam's mamma—is she in heaven too with the angels?" asked Fina, opening her eyes wide through their tears.

"I hope so," Sebastian answered in an altered voice.

Leam covered her face in her hands; then lifting it up, she said, imploringly, "Papa! do not talk to her of mamma! It is sacrilege!"

"I agree with you, Leam," said Mr. Dundas in a steady voice. "We meet at the same point, but perhaps by different methods."

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ALICK COVERED HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS.

